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THE  
HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

BY

ALBERT GALLATIN MACKEY, M.D., 33D.

WITH

THE HISTORY OF ITS INTRODUCTION AND PROGRESS  
IN THE UNITED STATES

THE HISTORY OF THE

SYMBOLS OF FREEMASONRY .

AND THE

HISTORY OF THE A.: A.: SCOTTISH RITE

BY

WILLIAM R. SINGLETON, 33D.

VOLUME THREE 

PUBLISHED BY

THE MASONIC HISTORY COMPANY

NEW YORK

LONDON, SYDNEY AND CALCUTTA

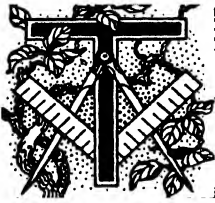
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## CHAPTER IX

### THE EARLY ENGLISH MASONIC GUILDS



O Brother William James Hughan are we indebted, more than to any other person, for the collection and publication of all the Masonic Guild ordinances that have been preserved in the British Museum, in the archives of old Lodges, or in private hands.

In the beginning of his work on *The Old Charges of the British Freemasons* (a book so valuable and so necessary, that it should be in the library of every Masonic archæologist), Brother Hughan says :

“Believing as we do that the present Association of Freemasons is an outgrowth of the Building Corporations and Guilds of the Middle Ages, as also a lineal descendant and sole representative of the early, secret Masonic sodalities, it appears to us that their ancient Laws and Charges are specially worthy of preservation, study and reproduction. No collection of these having hitherto been published we have undertaken to introduce several of the most important to the notice of the Fraternity.”

As Brother Hughan is distinguished for the accuracy and fidelity with which he has himself made, or caused to be made by competent scribes, copies of these Constitutions from the originals, I shall select from one of the earliest of them the ordinances or regulations, which shall be collated with those of the early Saxon Guilds, specimens of which have been given in the preceding chapter.

An account of these Old Records, as they are sometimes called, will be found in the first part of this work, where the subject of the *Legend of the Craft*, which they all contain, is treated. It will be unnecessary therefore to repeat here that account.

I might have selected for collation the statutes contained in the poem published by Halliwell, or those in the Cooke manuscript, as



both are of an older date than any in the collection of Hughan. But as they are all substantially the same in their provisions, and the latter have the advantage of greater brevity, I shall content myself with referring occasionally, when required, to the former.

The manuscript which is selected for collation is that known as the Landsdowne, whose date is supposed to be 1560. The date of the manuscript is, however, no criterion of the date of the Guild whose ordinances it recites, for that was of course much older. It is thought to be next in point of antiquity to the poem published by Mr. Halliwell, to which the date of 1390 is assigned, and Hughan says that "the style of caligraphy and other considerations seem to warrant so early a date being ascribed to it." In copying the statutes from the copy published by Brother Hughan, I have made an exact transcript, except that I have numbered the statutes consecutively instead of dividing them, as is done in the original, into two series. This has been done for convenience of collation with the Guild ordinances inserted in the preceding chapter and which have been numbered in a similar method. The orthography, for a similar reason, has been modernized.

#### CHARGES IN THE LANDSDOWNE MANUSCRIPT.

1. "You shall be true to God and Holy Church and to use no error or heresy, you understanding and by wise mens teaching, also that you shall be liege men to the King of England without treason or any falsehood and that you know no treason or treachery but that you amend and give knowledge thereof to the King and his Council ; also that ye shall be true to one another (that is to say) every Mason of the Craft that is Mason allowed, you shall do to him as you would be done to yourself.

2. "Ye shall keep truly all the counsel of the Lodge or of the chamber and all the counsel of the Lodge that ought to be kept by the way of Masonhood, also that you be no thief nor thieves to your knowledge free ; that you shall be true to the King, Lord or Master that you serve and truly to see and work for his advantage ; also you shall call all Masons your Fellows or your Brethren and no other names.

3. "Also you shall not take your Fellow's wife in villainy, nor de-flower his daughter or servant, nor put him to disworship ; also you

shall truly pay for your meat or drink wheresoever you go to table or board whereby the Craft or science may be slandered."

These are called "the charges general that belong to every true Mason, both Masters and Fellows." Then follow sixteen others, that are called "charges single for Masons Allowed." The only difference that I can perceive between the two sets of charges is that the first set refer to the moral conduct of the members of the Guild, while the second refer to their conduct as Craftsmen in the pursuit of their trade. The former were laws common or general to all the Guilds, the latter were peculiar to the Masons as a Craft Guild. The second set is as follows :

4. "That no Mason take on him no Lord's work, nor other mens, but if he know himself well able to perform the work, so that the Craft have no slander.

5. "That no Master take work but that he take reasonable pay for it, so that the Lord may be truly served and the Master live honestly and pay his Fellows truly ; also that no Master or Fellow supplant others of their work (that is to say) if he have taken a work or else stand Master of a work that he shall not put him out without he be unable of cunning to make an end of his work ; also that no Master nor Fellow shall take no apprentice for less than seven years and that the apprentice be able of birth that is freeborn and of limbs whole as a man ought to be, and that no Mason or Fellow take no allowance to be made Mason without the assent of his Fellows at the least six or seven and that he be made able in all degrees that is freeborn and of a good kindred, true and no bondsman and that he have his right limbs as a man ought to have.

6. "Also that a Master take no apprentice without he have occupation sufficient to occupy two or three Fellows at least.

7. "Also that no Master or Fellow put away lords work to task that ought to be journey work.

8. "Also that every Master give pay to his Fellows and servants as they may deserve, so that he be not defamed with false working.

9. "Also that none slander another behind his back to make him lose his good name.

10. "That no Fellow in the house or abroad answer another ungodly or reprovably without cause.

11. "That every Master Mason reverence his elder ; also that a Mason be no common player at the dice, cards or hazard nor at

any other unlawful plays through the which the science and craft may be dishonored.

12. "That no Mason use no lechery nor have been abroad whereby the Craft may be dishonored or slandered.

13. "That no Fellow go into the town by night except he have a Fellow with him who may bear record that he was in an honest place.

14. "Also that every Master and Fellow shall come to the Assembly if it be within fifty miles of him if he have any warning and if he have trespassed against the Craft to abide the award of the Masters and Fellows.

15. "Also that every Master Mason and Fellow that have trespassed against the Craft shall stand in correction of other Masters and Fellows to make him accord and if they cannot accord to go to the common law.

16. "Also that a Master or Fellow make not a mould stone, square nor rule to no lowen nor set no lowen work within the Lodge nor without to no mould stone.<sup>1</sup>

17. "Also that every Mason receive or cherish strange Fellows when they come over to the country and set them on work if they will work as the manner is (that is to say) if the Mason have any mould stone in his place on work and if he have none the Mason shall refresh him with money unto the next Lodge.

18. "Also that every Mason shall truly serve his Master for his pay.

19. "Also that every Master shall truly make an end of his work task or journey which soever it be."

Now, in the collation of these "Charges" with the ordinances of the early Guilds we will find very many points of striking resemblance, showing the common prevalence of the Guild spirit of religion, charity, and brotherly love in each, and confirming the

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<sup>1</sup> The Freemason must not make for one who is not a member of the Guild a mould or pattern stone as a guide for construction of mouldings or ornaments, whereby he would be imparting to him the secrets of the Craft. The word "lowen," which is found in no other manuscript, is supposed to be a clerical error for "cowan." It is just as probable that it is a mistake for "layer," a word used in other manuscripts and denoting a "rough mason." The stone-mason and the bricklayer are at this day separate trades. But whether the correct word be "cowan" or "layer," the object of the law was the same, namely, that a member of the Guild should not work with one who was not.

opinion of Hughan, and the hypothesis which has been constantly advanced, that the one was an outgrowth of the other.

The religious spirit which pervaded all the Guilds is here exhibited in number 1, which requires the Mason to be true to the Church and to use no error or heresy.

The charge in number 2, to keep the counsel of the Lodge, is met with in nearly all the Guild ordinances. Thus in the ordinances of the Shipmen's Guild, of the date of 1368, it is said :

"Whoso discovereth the counsel of the Guild of this fraternity to any strange man or woman and it may have been proved . . . shall pay to the light two stone of wax or shall lose (forfeit) the fraternity till he may have grace. That is he shall be suspended from the Guild until restored by a pardon."

The same regulation is found in the ordinances of several other Guilds, whose charters have been copied by Toulmin Smith. In those of the Guild of St. George the Martyr, dated 1376, there is no option afforded of a pecuniary fine. The words of the statute are that "no brother nor sister shall discover the counsel of this fraternity to no stranger on the pain of forfeiture of the fraternity forevermore." Nothing short of absolute expulsion was meted out to the betrayer of Guild secrets.

In the "Charges of a Free Mason," said to be "extracted from the ancient Records," published by Anderson in 1723, and adopted by the Grand Lodge, soon after the Revival, for the government of the Speculative Masons, this principle of the Guilds has been preserved. It is there said, in Charge VI., sec. 5, that the Mason is "not to let his family, friends, and neighbors know the concerns of the Lodge." It is at this day an almost unpardonable crime to disclose the secrets of the Lodge. The spirit of the Guild has been preserved in its successor, the modern Lodge.

The prohibition in the fourth charge, to dishonor a brother, or "put him to disworship," is found in the earliest of the Guilds. That of Orky, for example, prescribes a punishment to any member who "misgretes," that is, insults, abuses, or injures another member. The Guild was always careful to preserve a feeling of brotherly love and harmony among its members, a disposition which is also the characteristic of the Masonic fraternity. Hence we find the tenth point of these Masonic charges declaring that "none shall slander another behind his back." But the very language of the fourth

point of the charges would appear to have been borrowed from the ordinances of some of the Guilds.

In those of the Guild of the Holy Trinity, whose date is 1377, we meet with these statutes :

“No one of the Guild shall do anything to the loss or hurt of another, nor allow it to be done so far as he can hinder it, the laws and customs of the town of Lancaster being always saved.

“No one of the Guild shall wrong the wife or daughter or sister of another, nor shall allow her to be wronged, so far as he can hinder it.”

From the fifth to the twentieth charge, the regulations principally relate to the government of the Craft in their work. There is some difficulty in comparing these with the early Craft Guilds, from the paucity of charters of the latter which have been preserved. But wherever there are any points common to both, the analogy and resemblance between the two is at once detected.

Thus in the Charter of the Guild of Fullers at Lincoln, which Guild was begun in 1297, it is said that “none of the Craft shall work at the wooden bar (full cloth), with a woman, unless with the wife of a Master or his handmaid.”

Toulmin Smith says that he cannot explain this restriction. But it was in fact only an effort of the Guild spirit common to all the Craft Guilds, which forbade one who was a member or freeman of the Guild from working with one who was not a member.

The Guild of the Tailors of Exeter had an ordinance that “no one shall have a board or shop of the Craft unless free of the city.” And in the charter of the Guild of Tylers or Poyntours (pointers of walls) of Lincoln it is said that “no Tyler or Poyntour shall stay in the city unless he enters the Guild.”

The same spirit of exclusiveness is shown in the seventeenth point of the Masonic Constitutions, which forbids a Master or Fellow from working with a Cowan, or one who was not a “Mason Allowed,” that is to say, one who has been admitted into the fraternity or Guild.

This exclusion from a participation in labor of all who were not members of the sodality was a regulation common to all the Craft Guilds, but was perhaps more fully developed and more stringently urged in the Constitution of the Masonic Guild than in those of any of the others. It is from this principle of exclusiveness that the

modern Lodges of Speculative Masonry have derived their strict regulation of holding no communication with Masons who have not been "duly initiated," or with Lodges which have not been "legally constituted."

Contumacy, rebellion, or disobedience to the laws of the Craft or of the Guild was severely punished. The ordinances of the Smiths' Guild of Chesterfield prescribed that any brother who is "contumacious or sets himself against the brethren or gainsays any of these ordinances" shall be suspended, denounced, and excommunicated. A similar regulation is to be found in other Guilds.

According to the Landsdowne Statutes, a Mason is required to be true to every member of the Craft, and to reverence his elder or superior, and in the points of the statutes of the Masonic Guild, as set forth in the Halliwell MS., it is said that the Mason must be "true and steadfast to all these ordinances wheresoever he goes."

Suits at law between the members were discouraged and forbidden, except as a last resort, in all the Saxon Guilds.

The Shipmen's Guild provided that the Alderman (or Master) and the other members should do their best to adjust a quarrel, but if they were unable, then the Alderman should give them leave "to make their suit at common law."

In the Guild of the Holy Cross it was declared that no brother or sister of the Guild should go to law for a debt or a trespass until he had asked leave of the Alderman and of the men of the Guild.

The Statutes of the Guild of St. John the Baptist, enacted in 1374, are more explicit. There it is said that a member "cannot sue until he has shown his grievance to the Alderman and Guild brethren that are chief of the Council," and it adds that "the Alderman and the Guild brethren shall try their best to make them agree; and if they cannot agree they may make their complaint in what place they will."

The same provision is met with in all the Constitutions of the Masonic Guild. The earliest of them, the Halliwell MS., prescribes in case of a dispute a "love-day," or arbitration. The Landsdowne says that when a wrong is done by one of the members to another, the other Masters and Fellows must try to make them agree, and if they cannot agree they may then "go to the common law," which is the very expression used in the Shipmen's Guild above cited.

It is a very strong proof of the connection between the early Guilds and the modern Lodges that this reluctance to permit the brethren to carry their personal disputes out of the Craft and into the publicity of the courts was fully developed in the "Charges of the Speculative Masons," adopted in 1723. In these it is said, in the true spirit of the old Guilds to which Speculative Masonry succeeded, that, "with respect to Brothers or Fellows at law, the Master and Brethren should kindly offer their mediation, which ought to be thankfully accepted by the contending brethren; but if that submission is impracticable, they must, however, carry on their process or law-suit without wrath and rancor."

It is needless to extend these comparisons. Sufficient has been done to show that there is a close resemblance in their mode of organization, method of action, constitution, and spirit between the Saxon Guilds and the modern Masonic Lodges, which actually are, under another name, only Masonic Guilds. This resemblance indicates an historical connection between the two, and this connection may be more closely traced through the civic companies of London and other cities of England. That these latter were the direct offshoot from the former is a fact generally admitted by writers on the subject, and of it there can be no doubt. "In the Trade Guilds," says Mr. Thorpe, "we may see the origin of our civic companies."<sup>1</sup>

To these civic companies, and to one of them particularly, the Masons' Company in Basinghall Street, the reader's attention must be invited.

<sup>1</sup> "Diplomatarium Anglicum Ævi Saxonici," Preface, p. xvi.

*GEORGE OLIVER, D.D.*







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## CHAPTER X

### THE LONDON COMPANIES AND THE MASONS' COMPANY



ABOUT the middle of the 14th century, perhaps a little earlier, and in the reign of Edward III., the various trades began to be reconstituted under the name of Livery Companies and to change their name from Guilds to Crafts and Mysteries. There was, however, very little real difference between their new and their old organization, and the Guild spirit of fraternity remained the same.

There has been a difference of opinion as to the meaning of the word "Mystery," which was applied to these companies in such phrases as "the Mystery of the Tailors," or "the Mystery of the Saddlers."

Herbert says that the preservation of their trade-secrets was a primary ordination of all the fraternities, and continued their leading law as long as they remained actual "working companies," whence arose the names of "Mysteries" and "Crafts," by which they were for so many ages designated.<sup>1</sup>

This derivation is a reasonable one, especially when we remember that the word "craft," which was always associated with the word "mystery" in its primitive usage, signified art, knowledge, or skill.

But this explanation has not been universally accepted, and the word "Mystery," in its application to a trade or handicraft, has more generally been derived from the old or Norman French, where *mestière* was used to denote a craft, art, or employment. There is no certainty, however, that the word was not employed to denote the trade-secrets of a Guild or Company, as Herbert suggests. If *mestière* denoted, in old French, a trade, *mestre* meant, in the same language, a mystery, and the former word may have been de-

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies," vol. i., p. 45.

rived from the latter. But the modern Masons, in borrowing the word "Mystery" from the old companies, where they find their origin, undoubtedly use it in the sense of something hidden or concealed.

The origin of the livery and other companies out of the earlier Guilds is a matter of historical record.

Guilds, it has been already shown, existed in England from a very early period, but, as all tradesmen and artificers did not belong to Guilds, or, if they did, often acted irregularly in buying and selling a variety of wares or working in different handicrafts, a petition was presented to Parliament in the year 1355, in consequence of which it was enacted that all artificers and "people of mysteries" should choose forthwith each his own mystery, and, having chosen it, should thenceforth use no other.

It is here that we may assign the origin of the chartered companies, many of which exist to the present day, and among whom we shall find at a later period the Masons' Company, which was the direct predecessor of the Masons' Lodges, both of the Operative before and the Speculative after the beginning of the 18th century.

In a document found in the records of the City of London, of the date of 1364, and which has been published by Mr. Herbert,<sup>1</sup> we find the names of the principal, if not the whole of the city companies, which were in existence in that year. This document is an account, in Latin, of the sums received by the city chamberlain from those companies as gifts to the King, to aid him in carrying on the war with France.

The list records the names of thirty-two companies. Though we find several Craft Guilds, such as the Tailors, the Glovers, the Armorers, and the Goldsmiths, there is no mention of a Guild or Company of Masons. Whether such a body did not then exist as a chartered company, or whether, if in existence, it was too poor to make a contribution, which seems to have been a voluntary act, are questions which the document gives us no means of deciding.

Five years afterward, in 1369, a law was enacted by the municipal authorities of London, which must have tended to encourage the organization of these Companies. By this law the right of election of all city dignitaries, and all officers, including members of

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies," vol. i., p. 30.

Parliament, was transferred from the representatives of the wards, who had hitherto exercised this franchise, to the trading companies. A few members of each of these were selected by the Masters and Wardens, who were to repair to Guildhall for election purposes. This right has ever since remained, with some subsequent modifications in the twelve Livery Companies of London.

The effect of this law in increasing the number of Companies very speedily showed itself. In a list in Norman French of the "number of persons chosen by the several mysteries to be the Common Council" in the year 1370, it appears that the Companies had increased from thirty-two to forty-eight.

In this list we find the seventeenth to be the *Company of Freemasons*, and the thirty-fourth the *Company of Masons*. The former appears to have been a more select, or at least a smaller, Company than the latter, for while the Masons sent four members to the Common Council the Freemasons sent only two. Afterward the two Companies were merged into one, that of the Masons, to which I shall hereafter again revert.

The constitution and government of these Companies appear to have been framed very much after the model of the earlier Guilds.

They had the power of making their own by-laws or ordinances, and of enforcing their observance among their members. These ordinances were called "Points." The word is first used in the charters of Edward III., who wills that the said ordinances shall be kept and maintained *en touz pointz*, or "in all points." We find the same word in the *Constituciones Geometric* in the Halliwell MS., where the ordinances are divided into fifteen articles and fifteen points. It is also met with in all subsequent constitutions. As a technical term the word is preserved in the Speculative Masonry of to-day, whose obligations of duty are to be obeyed by initiates into the fraternity in all their "arts, parts, and points." These little incidents serve to show the uninterrupted succession of our modern Lodges from the early Guilds and the later Companies which were formed out of them. They are therefore worthy of notice in a history of the rise and progress of Freemasonry.

It has been seen that in the most of the Saxon Guilds the principal officer was called the Alderman. After the Guilds were chartered as Companies, the chief officers received the title of Masters

and Wardens, titles still retained in the government of Masonic Lodges.

The ordinances required that there should be held four meetings in every year to treat of the common business of the Company. These were the quarterly meetings to which reference is made by Dr. Anderson when, in his *History of the Revival of Masonry*, in the year 1717, he says that "the quarterly communication of the officers of the Lodges" was revived.

The regulation of apprentices formed an important part of the system pursued by the Companies. No one was admitted to the freedom or livery of any Company unless he had first served an apprenticeship, which was generally for the period of seven years. And even then he could not be admitted into the fellowship except with the consent of the members. Masters were not permitted to take more than a certain number of apprentices, lest the trade or art should be overstocked with workmen and the journeymen or fellows find less opportunity for employment.

Care was taken that one member should not undersell another member, or work for a less amount of pay or interfere with his contracts for labor. It was the duty of the Company to protect the interests of all alike.

There were judicious regulations for the settlement of disputes between the members, so as to avoid the necessity of a resort to law. The spirit of the early Guild was in this exactly followed. "If any debate is between any of the fraternity," says an ordinance of one of these Companies, "for misgovernance of words or asking of debt or any other things, then anon the party plaintiff shall come to the Master and tell his grievance and the Master shall make an end thereof."<sup>1</sup>

To speak disrespectfully of the Company ; to strike or insult a brother member ; to violate the regulations for clothing or dress ; to employ or work with men who were not free of the Company, and who were generally designated as "foreigners," or to commit any kind of fraud in carrying on the trade or handicraft, were all offenses for which the ordinances provided ample punishment.

The feeling of brotherly love exhibited in charity to an indigent or distressed member prevailed in all the Companies. When

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<sup>1</sup> "Ordinances of the Company of Grocers," anno 1463.

a member became poor from misfortune or sickness, he was to be assisted out of the common fund.

All of these regulations will be found copied in the Old Constitutions of the Operative Masons, a fact which conclusively proves that they were originally a Company following the general usage which had been adopted by the other Companies, whether Trade or Craft, such as the Grocers, the Mercers, the Goldsmiths, or the Tailors.

The subject of "Liveries" is one that will be interesting to the Speculative Freemason, from the rule with which he is familiar, that a Mason, on entering his Lodge, must be "properly clothed." The word "clothing" here indicates the dress which he should wear, especially and imperatively including his "lambskin apron."

We have the very important and very authentic evidence of the fact that secret societies existed in the 14th century, marked by all the peculiarities we have seen distinguishing the English Companies.

In the year 1326 the Council of Avignon fulminated what has been called the "Statute of Excommunications," its title being "Concerning the Societies, Unions and Confederacies called Confraternities, which are to be utterly extirpated."

This statute is contained in Hardouin's immense collection of the arts of Councils.<sup>1</sup> The following is a part of the preamble, and it shows very clearly that the Church at that time recognized and condemned the existence of those Guilds, Companies, or Societies for mutual help, some of which were the precursors of the modern Masonic Lodges, against which the Romish Church exhibits the same hostility.

The statute passed at Avignon commences as follows :

"Whereas, in certain parts of our provinces, noblemen for the most part, and sometimes other persons have established unions, societies and confederacies, which are interdicted by the canon as well as by the municipal laws, who congregate in some place once a year, under the name of a confraternity, and there establish assemblies and unions and enter into a compact confirmed by an oath that they will mutually aid each other against all persons whomsoever, their own lords excepted, and in every case, that each one will

<sup>1</sup> "Acta Conciliorum et Epistolæ Decretales æ Constitutiones Summorum Pontificum," Paris, 1714, tome vii, p. 1,507.



give to another, help, counsel and favor; and sometimes *all wearing a similar dress* with certain curious signs or marks, they elect one of their number as chief to whom they swear obedience in all things."

The decree then proceeds to denounce these confraternities, and to forbid all persons to have any connection with them under the penalty of excommunication. And here again is a pointed reference to the subject of livery:

"They shall not institute confraternities of this kind; one shall not give obedience nor afford assistance or favor to another; nor shall they *wear clothing which exhibits the signs or marks of the condemned thing.*"

That the mediæval Masons wore a particular dress when at work, which was the same in all countries, is evident from the plates in several illuminated manuscripts from the 10th to the 16th centuries, copies of which have been inserted by Mr. Wright in his essay on mediæval architecture.<sup>1</sup> The dress of the Masons in all these plates, whether in England, in France, or in Italy, is similar. "In reviewing and comparing these various representations," says Mr. Wright, "of the same process at so widely distinct periods, we are struck much less with their diversity than with the close resemblance between both workmen and tools, which continues amid the continual, and sometimes rapid, changes in the condition and manners of society. Whether this be in any measure to be attributed to the circumstance of the Masons forming a permanent society among themselves, which transmitted its doctrines and fashions unchanged from father to son, it is not very easy to determine."<sup>2</sup>

The question is not, however, of so difficult a solution as Mr. Wright supposes, when we see that every Guild or Company of tradesmen or artificers had its form of dress peculiar to itself, which was called its "livery." The Masons, as a Company, followed the usage and adopted their own livery or clothing. The modern Speculative Masons preserve the memory of the usage by declaring that none shall enter a Lodge or join in its labors unless he is "properly clothed;" that is, wears the livery of the fraternity.

According to the authority of Stow, in his *Survey of London*, liveries are not mentioned as having been worn before the reign of

<sup>1</sup> "Essays on Archæological Subjects," vol. ii., pp. 129-250.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

Edward I., or about the beginning of the 14th century. That is, they were then first licensed at that time or mentioned in the charters of the Companies, but he admits that they had assumed them before that time without such authority. And this is confirmed by the illuminated manuscripts to which allusion has been made above, which show that the Masons used a particular clothing as far back as the 10th century.

In the "Statute of Excommunications," passed in the beginning of the 14th century by the Council of Avignon, societies or confraternities are denounced which had been established for mutual aid, and which are described as "all wearing a similar dress with certain curious signs or marks."

About the middle of the 14th century there began a separation between the wealthier and the more indigent Companies, which ended after a long contention in the exclusion from the municipal government of all except what are now called "The Twelve Great Livery Companies," namely, the Companies of Mercers, Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Tailors, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, and Clothworkers. These Companies, as distinguished by wealth, by political power and commercial importance from the minor Companies, which were often only voluntary associations of men of the same trade or craft, were called the "substantial companies," the "principal crafts," the "chief mysteries," and other similar titles which were intended to imply their superiority, though many of the so-called "minor companies," as the weavers and bakers, were really of greater antiquity, of more public utility and importance.

Among these "minor companies," the one of especial importance to the present inquiry is the "Masons' Company."

Of this Company, Stow gives the following account in his *Survey of London*:

"The Masons, otherwise termed free masons, were a society of ancient standing and good reckoning, by means of affable and kind meetings divers times and as a loving brotherhood should use to do, did frequent their mutual assemblies in the time of King Henry IV. in the 12th year of whose most gracious reign they were incorporated."

A fuller account of the Company is given by Chiswell in the *New View of London*, printed in 1708, in the following words:

"Masons' Company was incorporated about the year 1410, having been called the *Free Masons*, a fraternity of great account, who have been honored by several Kings, and very many of the Nobility and Gentry being of their Society. They are governed by a Master, 2 Wardens, 25 Assistants, and there are 65 on the Livery.

"Their armorial ensigns are, Azure, on a Chevron Argent, between 3 Castles Argent, a pair of Compasses, somewhat extended, of the first Crest, a Castle of the 2nd."<sup>1</sup>

The Hall of the Company, in which they held their meetings, was "situated in Masons Alley in Basinghall street as you pass to Coleman street."<sup>2</sup>

Maitland, who published his *London and its Environs* in 1761, gives a later date for the charter. He says that "this Company had their arms granted by Clarencieux, King-at-Arms in 1477, though the members were not incorporated by letters patent till they obtained them from King Charles II. in 1677."<sup>3</sup>

The conflict in dates between Stow, with whom Chiswell agrees, and Maitland, the former ascribing the charter of the Company to Henry IV., in 1410, and the latter to Charles II., in 1677, may be reconciled by supposing that the original charter of Henry was submitted to a review and confirmation, which was technically called an "*inspeximus*," an act which we constantly meet with in old charters. In other words, the Masons first received a charter for their Company from Henry IV. in 1410, which charter was confirmed by Charles II. in 1677.

These Companies of traders and craftsmen were not confined to London, but were to be found in other cities. The Masons, however, do not appear to have always maintained a separate organization, but seem sometimes to have united with other craftsmen. Thus among the thirteen Companies which were incorporated in the city of Exeter, the thirteenth consisted of the Painters, Joiners, Carpenters, Masons, and Glaziers, who were jointly incorporated into a Company in 1602. It may be remarked that all of these crafts were connected in the employment of building. Each, however, had its separate arms, that of the Masons being described by Izacke in

<sup>1</sup>"New View of London," vol. ii., p. 611.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>"London and its Environs," vol. iv., p. 304.

his *Antiquities of Exeter* thus: "Sable, on a chevron between 3 towers argent, a pair of Compasses, dilated Sable."<sup>1</sup>

This will be an appropriate place to examine this subject of the Masonic Arms as historically connecting the Operative Craft with the Speculative Grand Lodge.

According to Stow, the Arms of the "Craft and Fellowship of Masons" of London were granted to them by William Hawkeslowe, Clarencieux King-of-Arms in the twelfth year of Edward IV., that is, in 1473, and were subsequently confirmed by Thomas Benott, Clarencieux King-of-Arms in the twelfth year of Henry VIII., or in 1521. These arms, which are blazoned in the original grant, now in the British Museum, are as follows: "Sable, on a chevron, engrailed argent between 3 castles of the second, with doors and windows of the field, a pair of compasses extended of the first." Translating the technical language of heraldry, the arms may be plainly described as a silver or white scalloped chevron, between three white castles with black doors and windows on a black field, and on the chevron a pair of compasses of a black color. Woodford says that these arms are supposed to have been adopted by the Grand Lodge of Speculative Masons in 1717. Kloss gives the same arms, except that the chevron is not scalloped (engrailed), but plain, as the seal of the Grand Lodge of England in 1743 and in 1767. The arms adopted by the Grand Lodge of England at the union in 1813, and still used, consist of a combination of the old Operative arms (the colors being, however, changed) with those of the Athol Grand Lodge, which are impaled. But as the latter arms were most probably an invention of Dermott, they are of no historical value.

From all this we see, so far as heraldry throws a light on history, that the English Speculative Masons have to the present day claimed to deduce their origin from the Operative Masons who were incorporated as a Company in the 15th century. They claimed to be their heirs, and according to the law of heraldry assumed their arms.

To resume the subject of the Masons' Companies, we have no records of the existence of those organizations under that name in more than a few places in England.

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<sup>1</sup> "Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter." By Richard Izaak, heretofore chamberlain thereof. Second edition, London, 1724, p. 68.

But the Masons seem often to combine with other Guilds for purposes of convenience. Several instances of this kind occur in old records, as in an appendix to the charter of the Guild of Carpenters of Norwich, begun in 1375, where it is stated that "Robert of Elfyngthem, Masoun, and certeyn Masouns of Norwiche" had contributed two torches or lights for the altar of Christ's Church at Norwich. Now, as that church was the place where the Carpenters' Guild celebrated their mass, and as the fact of the contribution is noted in their charter, it is reasonable to suppose that the Masons, having no Guild or Company of their own in Norwich, had united in religious services with the carpenters.

The impossibility of obtaining any continuous narrative of the transactions of the Masons' Company, which was one of the forty companies of London mentioned by Stow, must render many of the deductions which may be drawn from certain portions of the Harleian MS. altogether conjectural. The probability or correctness of the conjecture will have to be determined by the reason and judgment of the reader.

The Masonic public has in its possession at this day, and easily accessible by any student, some twenty or thirty documents printed from manuscripts ranging in date from the end of the 14th to the beginning of the 18th century. These documents are usually denominated "Masonic Constitutions." A very few of them were known to Dr. Anderson, and he has given inaccurate quotations from them in both of his editions of the *Book of Constitutions*. But for the greater number, new until a recent period, to the world, we are indebted to the researches of Masonic archæologists, by whose unpaid industry they have been unearthed, as we may say, from the shelves of the British Museum, from the archives of old Lodges, or from the libraries of private collectors.

But though we possess transcripts of these Constitutions correctly made from the original manuscripts, there is nothing on record to tell us by whom they were written, nor under what authority. Internal evidence alone assures that they are all, except the first two, copies of some original not yet found, and that they contain the legend or traditionary history of Freemasonry which was believed and the laws and regulations which were obeyed by the Operative Masons who lived from the 15th to the 18th century, if not some centuries before.

To make any conjecture as to the source whence they have emanated and for what purpose they were written, we must recapitulate what little we know of the history of the Masons' Company of London.

The Masons' Company was incorporated, according to Chiswell, in the year 1410, or thereabouts, by King Henry IV., which charter was renewed by Charles II. in 1677, I suppose by an "*inspeximus*" or confirmation of the original charter, as was usual.

But we know from the list contained in the records of the city of London, and published by Herbert, which has already been referred to, that in the year 1379, in the reign of Edward III., there were in London a company of Freemasons and a company of Masons, the former of which sent two and the latter four members to the Common Council of the city. These two were wholly distinct from each other, but Stow tells us that at a subsequent period they united together and were merged into one Company.

What was the difference between these two Companies, is a question that will naturally be asked, and which can not very easily be answered.

My own conjecture, and it is merely a conjecture, though I think not an unpalatable one, is that the Company of Freemasons was the representative in England of that body of Traveling Freemasons who had spread, under the auspices of the Church, over every country of Europe, and whose history will constitute hereafter an important portion of the present work ; while the Company of Masons was the representative of the general body of the Craft in the kingdom, who had formed themselves into a Guild, Company, or Sodality, just as the Mercers, the Grocers, the Tailors, the Painters, and other tradesmen and mechanics had done at the same period. The two companies were, however, afterward merged into one, which retained the title of "The Company of Masons."

Each of the Trade and Craft Guilds or Companies kept a book in which was contained its ordinances and a record of its transactions. The language of these books was at first the Norman-French ; sometimes, says Herbert, intermixed with abbreviated Latin, or the old English of Chaucer's day. Afterward, during the reign of Henry V., and by his influence, the ordinances were translated into the vernacular language of the period, and the books of the Companies were thereafter kept in English.

We find just such changes in the dialect of the old Masonic Constitutions from the archaic and, to unused ears, almost unintelligible style of the Halliwell poem to the modern English of the later manuscripts.

If the Masons' Company had had an historian like Herbert, who would have given a detailed history of its transactions from its origin, as he has done in respect to the twelve Livery Companies of London, we should, I think, have had no difficulty in defining the true character of the Old Constitutions. Many heroes have lived before Agamemnon, but they have died unwept because they had no divine poet to record their deeds.<sup>1</sup> So, too, we are left to dark conjecture in almost all that relates to the early history of the Masonic Craft in their primary Guild-life, for want of an authentic chronicler.

It may, however, be assumed, as a more than plausible conjecture, that there must have been for the Masons' Company a book of records and of their ordinances, just as there were for the other Trade and Craft Companies.

Indeed, Dr. Anderson says, in his second edition, that "the Freemasons had always a book in manuscript called the *Book of Constitutions* (of which they had several very ancient copies remaining), containing not only their Charges and Regulations, but also the history of architecture from the beginning of time."

Dr. Plot, also, in his *Natural History of Staffordshire*, tells us that the society of Freemasons "had a large parchment volume amongst them containing the history and rules of the craft of Masonry." And the contents of that volume, as he describes them, accord very accurately with what is contained in the Old Constitutions that are now extant.

We have, then, good reason to believe that the manuscript Constitutions, which consist of the *Legend of the Craft* and the statutes or Ordinances of the Guild, are all copies of an original contained in the archives of the Company, and which original Anderson says was called the *Book of Constitutions*.

It is not necessary that we should contend that the title given by Anderson is the right one, or that he had authority for the statement. It is sufficient to believe that there was a book in the ar-

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<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Carm.*, lib. iv., 9.

chives of the Masons' Company, as there was a similar book in the archives of the other Companies, and that the manuscript Constitutions, as we now have them, were copied at various times and by different persons from that book.

But it must be evident, to anyone who will carefully collate these manuscripts, that there must have been two originals at least. The *Legend of the Craft* and the set of ordinances differ so materially in the Halliwell poem from those in the later manuscript as to indicate very clearly that the latter could not have been copied from the former, but must have been derived from some other original.

Now, in 1410 there were, according to the catalogue given by Herbert from the London records, two distinct Companies, that of the Freemasons and that of the Masons. It is very reasonable to conclude that each of these Companies had a *Book of Constitutions* of its own. If so, the Halliwell Constitutions may have found their original in the Company of Freemasons, and the later manuscripts, so unlike it in form and substance, may have had their original in the Company of Masons.

If, as Findal and some others have supposed, the Halliwell Constitution was of German or Continental origin, the invocation to the Four Crowned Martyrs leading to that supposition, then the fact that this manuscript of Halliwell was copied from the *Book of Constitutions* of the Company of Freemasons would give color to the hypothesis which I have advanced, that the Company of Freemasons, as distinguished from that of the Masons in the year 1410, was an offshoot from the sodality of Traveling Freemasons, who, at an earlier period, sprang from the school of Como in Lombardy.

A new charter, or rather, as I suppose, a confirmation of the old one, was granted to the Masons' Company in 1677 by King Charles II. About this time we might look for some changes in the long-used *Book of Constitutions* of the old Masons' Company, which had been incorporated in 1410, and of which the earlier manuscripts, from the Landsdowne to the Sloane, are exemplars.

Now, just such changes are to be found in the Harleian MS., which has been conjecturally assigned to the approximate date of 1670. An examination of this manuscript will show that it materially differs in several important points from all those that preceded it. Besides the old ordinances, which are much like those in the preceding manuscripts, but couched in somewhat better lan-



guage, there are in the Harleian MS. fifteen "new articles," as recognizing for the first time a distinction between the Company and the Lodges.

Article 30, which is the fifth of the new articles, is in the following words :

"That for the future the said Society, Company, and Fraternity of Free Masons shall be regulated and governed by one Master and Assembly and Wardens as the said Company shall think fit to choose at every yearly General Assembly."

There are several points in this article which are worthy of attention, as throwing light on the condition of the fraternity at that time.

1st. The words *for the future* imply that there was a change then made in the government of the Society, which must have been different in former times.

2d. The use of the word *Company* shows that these regulations, or "new articles," were not for the government of Lodges only, but for the whole Company of Masons. The existence of the Masons' Company is here for the first time recognized in actual words.

3d. The word "Assembly" is entirely without meaning in its present location, or if there is any meaning it is an absurd one. It can not be supposed that the Company at a General Assembly would choose an Assembly to govern it. Doubtless this is a careless transcription of the original by a copyist, who has written "Assembly" instead of "Assistants." In the charters of the other Companies we frequently see the provision that besides the Master and Warden a certain number of "Assistants" shall be appointed out of the Guild, to aid the former officers by their counsel and advice. For instance, in a charter of the Drapers' Company, after providing for the election of a Master and four Wardens, it is added that there may and shall be constituted and appointed certain others of the Guild "who shall be named assistants of the Guild or fraternity aforesaid, and from that time they shall be assisting and aiding to the Master and Wardens in the causes, matters, business, and things whatsoever touching or concerning the said Masters and Wardens."

Now, as assistants formed no part of the government of a Lodge, but were common in the Livery Companies, it is evident

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<sup>1</sup> See the Charter in Herbert's "Twelve Great Livery Companies," vol. i., p. 487.

that the article under consideration, and therefore that the Harleian MS., in which it is contained, were copied from the Book of the Masons' Company.

4th. This article decides the fact that there was at that day a "yearly assembly" of the Company. We are not, however, to infer that this "yearly assembly" of the Masons' Company constituted, as some of our earlier histories have supposed, a Grand Lodge. If so, as the Master of the Company must necessarily have presided over the General Assembly, he would have been its Grand Master, and as there were other Masons' Companies in other parts of England, there would have been several Grand Lodges as well as several Grand Masters, all of which is unsupported by any historical authority. Indeed, neither the words "Grand Master" nor "Grand Lodge" are to be met with in any of the Old Constitutions, from the Halliwell MS. onward to the latest. Both titles seem to have come into use at the time of what is called the Revival, in 1717, and not before.

There are some other articles in this Harleian MS. that are worthy of attention, as showing the condition and the usages of the Craft in the 17th century, and which will be again referred to when that subject is under consideration in a subsequent chapter.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLIES AND THE LODGES OF MEDIÆVAL MASONS



HERE were two conditions of the Craft in the period embraced between the 14th and 17th centuries which are peculiarly worth the notice of the student of Masonic history. These are the General Assembly of the Craft at stated periods, and their more customary meetings in Lodges.

It is to be regretted that the early records of English Masonry furnish but the slightest and most unsatisfactory accounts of the transactions of either of these bodies, so that most of our information on this subject is merely conjectural.

"We possess," says Mr. Halliwell, "no series of documents, nor even an approach to a series, sufficiently extensive to enable us to form any connected history of the ancient institutions of Masons and Freemasons. We have, in fact, no materials by which we can form any definite idea of the precise nature of those early societies."<sup>1</sup>

This is very true, and the historian finds himself impeded in every step of his labor in tracing the early progress of the institution.

"We must therefore," as he continues to observe, "rest contented with the light which a few incidental notices and accidental accounts, far from being altogether capable of unsuspected reliance, afford us."

In the forty years which have elapsed since this passage was written, the energetic industry of Masonic archæologists has brought to light many old records which are "of unsuspected reliance," which, though still too few to form a complete series of historic stages, will enable us to understand better than we did a half century ago the real condition of the Masonic sodalities in the Middle Ages. Had these records been in Mr. Halliwell's possession when he presented the first of them as a valuable contribution to Ma-

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<sup>1</sup> "Society of Antiquaries," April 18, 1839, p. 444.

sonic history, he would hardly have erred as he did in his belief of the truth of the Prince Edwin story, or of the authenticity of the Leland MS.

As the geologist has been enabled to trace the gradual changes in the earth's surface, and in the character of its living inhabitants at the remotest period, by the fossil which he finds embedded in its early strata, or as the anthropologist learns the true character of prehistoric man from the stone and bronze implements that he has discovered in ancient caves and mounds, so the archæologist can form a very correct notion of the state of mediæval Freemasonry from the scattered records of that period, which, long preserved in the obscurity of neglected archives or in the vast collections of the British Museum, have at length been published to the world, to form the authentic materials of a Masonic history.

They confirm many statements hitherto supposed to be without authority, and enable us by their silence to reject much that has been fancifully presented as authentic.

Thus in the manuscript which was discovered and published by Mr. Halliwell, and which he very correctly considered to be the earliest document yet brought forward connected with the progress of Freemasonry in Great Britain, we may learn that at least as early as toward the end of the 14th century the Masons met on specified occasions and under certain rules and regulations in a body which they called the "Congregation" or the "Assembly." Of this there can not be the slightest doubt, since the genuineness of the Halliwell poem is universally recognized as having been written between the years 1350 and 1400, and as containing an authentic account of the condition of the Craft at that period.

In the second article of the Constitutions contained in this work it is said that "every Mason who is a Master, must be at the general congregation if he is informed in sufficient time where that assembly is to be holden, unless he should have a reasonable excuse."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "That every Mayster that ys a mason  
Most ben at the generale congregacyon,  
So that he hyt resonably y-tolde  
Where that the semble schal be holde ;  
And to that semble he most nede gon  
But he have a resenabul skwsacyon."

*Halliwell MS.*, lines 107-112.

I have spared the reader the archaic and, to most persons, unintelligible language, but have given the true meaning in the translation, and append the original in a marginal note.

From this law it would appear that in the 14th century it was the usage of Master Masons to assemble from various parts of the country for purposes connected with the business or interests of the Craft.

In the Cooke MS., whose date is at least an hundred years later, the writer gives an account of the origin of this custom. It arose, he says, in the time of King Athelstan, who ordained that annually, or every three years, all Master Masons and Fellows should come up from every province and country to congregations, where the Masters should be examined in the laws of the Craft, and their skill and knowledge in their profession be investigated, and where they should receive charges for their future conduct.

As this, however, is a mere tradition, founded on the legend of Athelstan's, or rather Prince Edwin's, Assembly of Masons at York, it can not be accepted as a foundation for any historical statement.

But in the same manuscript we find the evidence that it was the custom of Masters coming from their Lodges or places where they worked with the Fellows under them, and their Apprentices, to some sort of gathering which was presided over by one of the Masters as the principal or chief of the meeting. It is the second article of the Constitutions, according to the Cooke MS., which is in the following words. I again translate the archaic language into modern English.

“That every Master should be previously warned to come to his congregation, that he may come in due time unless excused for some reason. But those who had been disobedient at such congregations, or been false to their employers, or had acted so as to deserve reproof of the Craft, could be excused only by extreme sickness, of which notice was to be given to the Master that is principal of the assembly.”<sup>1</sup>

I say that this is evidence that in the latter part of the 15th century, which is the date of the manuscript, the custom did exist of several Masters assembling from different points for purposes of consultation, because a law would hardly be enacted for the due ob-

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<sup>1</sup> “Cooke MS.,” lines 740-755.

servance of a certain custom unless that custom had a substantial existence. This is not a tradition or legend, but the statement in a manuscript constitution of the existence of a law. The manuscript is admitted to be genuine. That it tells us what were the regulations of the Craft that were in force when it was written is not denied. And therefore, as it gives us the rules that were to govern Masters in their attendance upon an assembly or congregation of Masters, we must recognize the historical fact that at that time such assemblies or congregations did exist among the Craft of Masons.

These assemblies were probably extemporary, or called at uncertain times, as necessity required. If they were held at stated and regular periods, it would hardly have been required that a Master must have received previous notice to render him amenable to punishment for non-attendance. This would also lead us to presume that there was some person in whom, by general concurrence, was vested the authority to designate the time of meeting, and whose duty it was to give the necessary warning. And it would seem that this person must have been the one to whom excuses were to be rendered, and who is styled, in the quaint language of the manuscript, "pryncipall of that gederyng."

What was the circuit within which the jurisdiction of such an assembly extended, or what was the distance from which Master Masons were expected to repair to it, we must learn from later manuscript Constitutions, for the Cooke MS. leaves us in ignorance on the subject. It tells us only that assemblies were occasionally held, but says nothing of the number of representatives who constituted them nor of the circuit of country which they governed.

This is, however, determined by the later Constitutions. In the Landsdowne MS., whose date is sixty years after that of the Cooke, it is said that "every Master and Fellow shall come to the Assembly if it be within fifty miles of him." This distance is repeated in the York MS., dated 1600, in the Grand Lodge MS. of 1632, in the Sloane MS. of 1646, in the Lodge of Antiquity MS. of 1686, and in the Alnwick MS. as late as 1701.

There is, however, a discrepancy not to be explained in some of the Constitutions. The Harleian MS., whose ascribed date is 1650, says that the Mason must come to the Assembly if it be within ten miles of his abode, and in the Constitutions in the Lodge of Hope MS., whose date is 1680, and those in the Papworth MS., whose date

is as late as 1714, but must undoubtedly have been a mere copy of some older one, the distance is reduced to five miles.

Those who, in this reference to what is called sometimes a congregation, sometimes a general assembly, and once, as in the Papworth MS., an association, have sought to discover the evidence of the existence before the 18th century of a Grand Lodge for England and a Grand Master presiding over all the Craft in the kingdom, will not find themselves supported by any expressions either in these Old Constitutions or in any other records of the times which will warrant such an interpretation of the nature of these meetings of the Craft.

The object of these Assemblies, as described with great uniformity in all the Constitutions, was to submit those who had trespassed against the rules of the Craft to the judgment and award of their brethren, and where there were disputes to endeavor to reconcile the difference by a brotherly arbitration. If we may rely on a statement made in what is called the Roberts MS., from which we get the earliest printed book in Masonry, and which manuscript could not have been later than the latter part of the 17th century, these General Assemblies had also the power of making new regulations for the government of the Craft.

A book was printed in 1722 by J. Roberts, under the title of *The Old Constitutions belonging to the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons*. This book was, he says, "taken from a Manuscript wrote above five hundred years since," but the internal evidence shows that it could not have been written earlier than about the middle of the 17th century. It has indeed all the appearance of being a careless copy of the Harleian MS., with some additional matter which is not found in that document, the source of which is not known.

In this book of Roberts are some new regulations which are said to be "additional orders and Constitutions made and agreed upon at a General Assembly held at . . . on the eighth day of December, 1663."

Dr. Anderson, who, it is very probable, had seen this statement in the work of Roberts, has with an unwarranted inaccuracy, of which the Masonic historians of the 18th century were too often guilty, materially altered the statement in the second edition of his *Book of Constitutions*, and says that "Henry Jermyn, Earl of St.

Albans as their Grand Master held a General Assembly and Feast on St. John's Day 27 Dec. 1663."

It will be seen that the Roberts Constitution says nothing of the Earl of St. Albans, nothing of his having exercised the functions or assumed the title of Grand Master, nothing of a feast, and nothing of the time of assembly being on St. John the Evangelist's day, which is an entirely modern Masonic festival. All that Anderson has here said is merely supposititious, and by this act of unfairness, Bro. Hughan very correctly says, his "character as an accurate historian is certainly not improved."

It has been seen that the earlier manuscript Constitutions do not speak of any specific time when the Assembly was held, and it is possible, or perhaps probable, that at first they were called at extemporaneous periods and according to the needs of particular districts where there were Master Masons engaged. This is, however, altogether conjectural.

But it would seem that about the middle of the 17th century, and indeed perhaps long before, there was instituted an annual assembly. The Harleian MS. leaves us no doubt upon the point, for it says, "that for the future the sayd Society, company and fraternity of Free Masons shal bee regulated and governed by one Master and Assembly and Wardens, as the said Company shall think fit to choose at every *yearely general Assembly*."

That this was to be done "for the future" would seem to imply that it had not been done theretofore, or it might mean that what had formerly been an authorized usage was thereafter to be confirmed as a law by this new regulation, and this is probably the more correct interpretation.

It is, however, very satisfactorily shown by this Harleian document that at the time when it was written, namely, in 1670, the Masons had begun to meet in an annual assembly, even if they did not do so before.

There is another feature in the mediæval condition of Freemasonry, which we may discover from an examination of these old manuscript Constitutions. While it is very clear that the Masons were in the habit of assembling annually, or perhaps at more frequent periods, in congregations, for general consultation on the interests of the whole body of craftsmen, they also united in other associations of a local character, which, in the earliest records to which we have



obtained access, were known by the name of "Lodges." This was an institution peculiar to the Masons. We hear of the Guilds, and afterward of the Company of Carpenters, the Company of Smiths, the Company of Tailors, and others belonging to various crafts, but we have no knowledge that there ever existed any lodges of Carpenters, Smiths, or Tailors. The Masons alone met in these local sodalities, which were of course in some way connected with the Company, after it had been chartered, and even before, when it existed as a Guild without incorporation.

The existence of these Lodges is not conjectural, but capable of the most convincing historical proof derived from these old manuscripts, whose genuineness has never been and can not be doubted, as well as from the testimony of other writers, some of them not of Masonic character, and therefore less suspicious.

The proofs of the existence of Lodges in which Masons in different parts of the kingdom met may be first presented as they are found in the Old Constitutions.

The Halliwell poem, which is the earliest of these manuscript records, plainly refers to the fact. In the 4th Article of the Constitutions which it prescribes, the Master Mason is forbidden to take a bondman as an Apprentice. And the reason assigned why this prohibition is made is that the lord whose bondman he is has the right to bring him away from any place where he might go, and if he were to take him from the Lodge it would be a cause of great trouble.

" For the lorde that he ys bonde to  
May fache the prentes whersever he go.  
Gef yn the *logge* he were y-take  
Much desese hyt myght ther make."<sup>1</sup>

And in the third point of the same Constitution it is forbidden to the Apprentice to tell anyone the private concerns of his Master's house or whatsoever is done in the Lodge.

" The prevystye of the chamber telle he no man,  
Ny yn the *logge* whatsoever they done."<sup>2</sup>

The Cooke MS.,<sup>3</sup> which is the next of these old records that have been brought to light by modern researches, repeats these two prohibitions. It goes more at length into the causes which should

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<sup>1</sup> "Halliwell MS."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> "Cooke MS.," lines 769-777.

prevent a bondman from being made a Mason, and explains the nature of the trouble, briefly alluded to in the former manuscript, which might arise if the lord should seek to seize his bondman in the lodge. The bondman, it says, should not be received as an Apprentice, because his lord to whom he is bound might take him, as he had the right to do, from his business, and lead him "out of his *logge* or out of the place where he is working, and the trouble that might then be apprehended, would be that his fellows would peradventure help him and dispute for him and therefrom manslaughter might arise."

And in the third point of these Constitutions it is said that the Mason "can hele (must conceal) the counsel of his fellows in *logge* and in chamber."<sup>1</sup>

In the later manuscripts we find the same recognition of the lodge as in these first two.

In the Landsdowne MS. it is said that Masons must "keep truely all the councell of the lodge or of the chamber." This is repeated in substantially similar words in all the subsequent Constitutions. The lodge is also recognized as a place where the work of Operative Masonry was pursued, for the Freemason is forbidden to set the cowan to work within the lodge or without it.

We see, also, that there were many lodges as distinct organizations, but all connected by one bond of fellowship, scattered over the country. One of the regulations in all these Constitutions was that strange Fellows were to be cherished and put to work, if there were any work for them, and if not, they were "to be refreshed with money and sent unto the next lodge."

These Operative Lodges were as exclusive in relation to any connection with cowans, rough layers, or Masons who were not accepted as free of the Guild, as the modern Speculative Lodges are in relation to any connection with the uninitiated, or, as they are often called, "the profane."

Thus we find in all the Constitutions up to the year 1701 a regulation which forbade the giving of employment to "rough layers," or Masons of an inferior class, who had not been admitted into the society. "Noe Mason," says the latest of these Constitutions,<sup>2</sup> "shall make moulds, square or Rule to any Rough Layers, alsoe

<sup>1</sup> "Cooke MS.," lines 441-453.

<sup>2</sup> "Alnwick MS.," anno 1701.

that noe Mason sett any Layer within a Lodge or without to hew or mould stones with noe mould of his own makeing." In brief words, he was to give such an intruder no work that was connected with the higher principles of the art, for the mould was the model or pattern constructed by the geometrical rules that were the most important secrets of the mediæval builders. It is probable that these unfreemen were sometimes employed in the more menial occupations of the craft.

The Papworth MS., whose date is 1714, is the only one which omits this prohibition. Whether this omission arose from the growth at that late period of a more liberal spirit, or whether it was the clerical error of a careless copyist, are questions not easily determined. It is, however, probable that the latter was the case, as the spirit of exclusiveness adhered to the Masonic Guilds as it did to all the guilds of other crafts, and is continued to the present day by the Livery Companies, which are the successors of the early guilds, where the same spirit of exclusiveness prevailed.

The system of apprenticeship, which was common to all the guilds, was maintained with very strict regulations by the Masons.

No Master or Fellow was to take an Apprentice for less than seven years, nor was any Master to take an Apprentice unless his business was so extensive as to authorize the employment of at least two or three Journeymen. The spirit of monopoly is plainly perceptible in this regulation. The Fellows or Journeymen were unwilling to give to Masters of moderate means the opportunity, by the employment of Apprentices who might soon learn the trade, to add to the number of craftsmen and thus to diminish the value of their labor.

Great regard was paid to the physical condition of the Apprentice. In all the constitutions, from the very earliest to the latest, care is taken to declare that the Apprentice must be able-bodied. "The Master," says the Halliwell MS., "shall for no consideration of profit or emolument make an Apprentice who is imperfect, that is whose limbs are not altogether sound. It would be a great disgrace to the craft to make a halt and lame man. An imperfect man of this kind would do but little good to the craft. So every one may know that the craft wishes to have a strong man." And the compiler of the Constitutions quaintly adds the warning that "a maimed

man has no strength, as will be known long before night ;” that is, he will show his weakness by failing in his work.

“ . . . maymed mon, he hath no might,  
Ye mowe hyt knowe long yer night.”

This was written about the end of the 14th century. A hundred years afterward the Cooke MS. repeats the admonition in these words : “The sixth article is this, that no Master for no covetousness nor no profit take no Apprentice to teach that is imperfect, that is to say, having any maim for the which he may not truly work as he ought to do.”

The same rigid rule of physical perfection in the Apprentice is perpetuated in all the subsequent constitutions. Thus the Landsdowne MS. (1560) says he “of limbs whole as a man ;” the York MS. (1600), he must be “able of body and sound of limbs ;” the Grand Lodge MS. (1632), he must be “of limbs as a man ought to be ;” the Harleian MS. (1670), he must have “his right and perfect limbs and personal of body to attend the said science,” and the Alnwick MS. (1701), that he must have “his right limbs as he ought to have.”

When, in 1717, the Speculative superseded the Operative order, this regulation, which had been enforced for at least three centuries, was abandoned, and in the charges adopted by the Grand Lodge in 1722, Masons were required to be only good and true men, free-born, and of mature age.

Sixteen years afterward, when Anderson compiled and published the second edition of the *Book of Constitutions*, he, apparently without authority, restored the original rule of the guild, for in the same charge the words in that edition were altered by the insertion of the regulation that the men made Masons must be “hail and sound, not deformed or dismembered at the time of their making.”

I say that this change was apparently made without authority, for in the subsequent editions of the *Book of Constitutions*, published after the death of Anderson, the language of the first edition was restored. Hence the present Grand Lodge of England does not require bodily perfection as a preliminary qualification for initiation.

But as Dermott in compiling his *Ahiman Rezon* for the use of the Grand Lodge of Ancients or the Schismatic Grand Lodge,

adopted Anderson's second edition as the basis of his work, all the lodges emanating from that Grand Lodge exacted the rigid guild law of corporeal perfection. As a very large number of the lodges in the United States had been chartered by the Grand Lodge of Ancients, it has happened that the old rule of the guild has been retained sometimes in its full extent and sometimes with slight modifications in the Constitutions of the American Grand Lodges, all of which forbid the initiation into Masonry of one who is deficient in any of his limbs or members.

The American usage, however much it may be objected to because it sometimes closes the door of the lodges to worthy men on certain occasions, has certainly maintained more perfectly than the English the connection between the old Operative and the more modern Speculative branch, a connection whose preservation is important because it constitutes a part of the history of the Order.

Another fact in the character of the mediæval Guild or Company of Masons that shows the connection with that association and the Speculative Masonry that grew out of it is the system of secrecy that was practiced. It has been hitherto shown that all the early guilds, whether Masonic or otherwise, required their members to keep the secret counsels of the body. And this regulation has been very correctly supposed to allude to the secrets of the trade, in their transaction of business if it were a Commercial Guild, or if it were a Craft Guild the methods of work. These secrets could only be acquired by a long apprenticeship to the trade or art, and it was unlawful to impart them to any persons who were not members of the guild.

The evidence of this has already been shown by extracts from various guild ordinances, and from the old Masonic Constitutions. But the secrets of the Guild or Company of Masons seems to have been maintained more rigidly by their statutes than were those of any other guild. What the secrets of mediæval Freemasonry were will be discussed when we come to treat of the Traveling Freemasons, who spread in the 11th and 12th centuries from Lombardy over Europe, and established themselves in all the countries which they visited ; that their arcana consisted of a secret system adopted by the Freemasons in building. Of this, as Mr. Paley<sup>1</sup> has observed,

<sup>1</sup> "Manual of Gothic Architecture," chap. vi., p. 208.

little or nothing has ever transpired, and we may reasonably attribute our ignorance on the subject to the conscientious observance by the members of the fraternity of the oath of secrecy administered to them on their admission into the society.

The earlier Masonic Constitutions do not give the form of the oath, or indeed refer to an oath at all. They simply direct that the counsels of the Lodge and of Masonry shall be kept inviolate. It is not until 1670 that we find, in the Harleian MS., supposed to have been written in that year, the very words of the obligation that was to be administered. The constitutions or ordinances of that Constitution prescribe "That no person shall be accepted a Freemason or know the secrets of the said society until he hath first taken the oath of secrecy hereafter following."

The "oath of secrecy" thus prescribed is given in the following words, which will on comparison be found to be much more precise and solemn than the oath which was administered in the other guilds or companies :

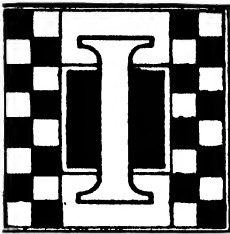
"I, A. B., do, in the presence of Almighty God and my Fellows, and Brethren here present, promise and declare, that I will not at any time hereafter, by any act or circumstance whatsoever, directly or indirectly, publish, discover, reveal or make known any of the secrets, privileges, or counsels of the fraternity or fellowship of Free Masonry, which at this time, or at any other time hereafter, shall be made known unto me. So help me God and the holy contents of this book."

The last words indicate that this was a corporeal oath administered on the Gospels, as was the form always used at that period in administering oaths. As to the language, the intelligent Mason will readily perceive how closely the spirit of this old Masonic obligation has been preserved by the modern Speculative fraternity. It is another indirect mark pointing out the close connection and uninterrupted succession of the old and the new systems.

It is unnecessary to dilate further on the ordinances which are contained in these Constitutions. The object has been sufficiently attained, of proving the correctness of the hypothesis that the modern Lodges are the direct successors of these bodies whose laws and customs are so plainly exhibited in the old Masonic manuscripts.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE HARLEIAN MANUSCRIPT AS A GERM OF HISTORY—USAGES OF THE CRAFT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



It has been seen in the preceding chapter how much information as to the usages of the craft in mediæval times may be derived from the statutes and regulations contained in the manuscript Constitutions, and more especially in that most valuable and interesting one, the Harleian MS. This document differs very materially from all the others that preceded it, and suggests to us that there were important changes which about that time took place in the usages of the craft.

Of this manuscript, the date of which is supposed to be 1670, Bro. Hughan has said that it "contains the fullest information of any that we are aware of and is of great value and importance in consequence."<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of this manuscript will sustain the statement of this indefatigable explorer of old records and to whom we are indebted for a correct transcription from the original which is deposited in the British Museum.

No analysis, so far as I know, has ever been attempted of this important manuscript, so as to deduce its true character from the internal evidence which it contains.

It has been already shown that the Masons' Company received a new charter or act of incorporation from Charles II. just about the time that the Harleian MS. appears to have been written. It has also been suggested that the granting of the new charter would probably be considered as a very opportune period for the Masons' Company to make some changes in its *Book of Constitutions* by the adoption of new regulations.

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<sup>1</sup> "Old Charges of the British Freemasons," p. 11.

Now, I have supposed that the Harleian MS., differing so much, as it does, from all preceding manuscripts, is a copy or transcript of the *Book of Constitutions* of the Masons' Company as it was modified in the reign of Charles II.

In presenting us with the laws of the Craft which were at that day in force, it supplies us with a very accurate and authentic exposition of the usages and customs of the fraternity as they then prevailed.

A brief analysis therefore of some of the most important articles will certainly advance us very considerably in our knowledge of the progress of Freemasonry in the 17th century, about a hundred years before the Operative element of Freemasonry was absolutely extinguished by the Speculative. Hence it is that I call the Harleian MS. a germ of Masonic history.

We may profitably commence our analysis of the historical points developed in this manuscript by directing our attention to the origin and meaning of the words "Accepted Mason," which are so familiar at the present day in the title given to the Order as that of "The Free and Accepted Masons."

The 26th Article of the *Harleian Constitutions* directs that "no person shall be *accepted* a Mason, unless he shall have a lodge of five free Masons;" and the next article says that "no person shall be *accepted* a Free Mason but such as are of able body, honest parentage," etc.

The word "accepted" here used is of some importance as having been one of the titles afterward adopted by the Speculative Masons, who called themselves "Free and Accepted," in allusion to this very article. The word is first employed in the Harleian MS. In the older manuscripts we find the expression "Masons allowed," which, however, evidently means the same thing. In the two articles cited above it is very plain that an "Accepted Mason" is one who has been admitted into the fraternity by some ceremony, which is called his "acceptation," or acceptance. It is equivalent to the modern word "initiation."

But in the 28th Article we find the same word used in a double sense, of both "initiation" and "affiliation." It prescribes that "no person shall be accepted a Free Mason nor shall be admitted into any lodge or assembly until he hath brought a certificate of the time of acceptance from the lodge that accepted him unto the Mas-



ter of that Limit and Division where such lodge was kept which said Master shall enroll the same in parchment in a roll to be kept for that purpose, to give an account of all such acceptations at every General Assembly."

There is a very large and interesting amount of knowledge of the character of the Masonic organization and of its usages in the 17th century to be derived from this article, if understandingly interpreted.

No one was to be accepted a Freemason, that is, admitted into the fellowship or made free of the Guild or Company, or, as we would say in modern phrase, "affiliated," in contradistinction to a "cowan" or "rough layer," one who was not permitted to work or mingle with the Freemasons, unless he had brought to the Master of the limit or division in which a certain lodge was situated a certificate that he had been accepted (the word here signifying initiated or admitted by some ceremony into the craft) in that lodge. The Master of that division or limit must have been possessed of an authority or jurisdiction over several lodges, something like the Provincial Grand Masters in England or the District Deputy Grand Masters in the United States. This Master kept a list of the Masons thus made whose making had been certified to him and made a return of the same to the General Assembly at the annual meeting. This is much the same as is done at the present day, when the lodges make a return to the Grand Lodge at its annual communication of the number and names of the candidates that have been initiated by it during the year.

So there were two kinds of acceptance. The acceptance into the lodge, which was also called "making a Mason," and the acceptance afterward into the full fellowship of the Society or Company, which was to be done only on the production of a certificate of the time and place when the first acceptance or initiation occurred.

We find an analogous case in the modern usage. A man is first initiated in a lodge, and then he is made a member of it. The one usually follows the other, but not necessarily. A candidate may be initiated in a lodge and yet not claim or receive membership in it. Such cases sometimes occur. The candidate has been *accepted* in the old sense of *initiated*, in the lodge, but if he goes away and desires to be accepted into the full fellowship of the fraternity,

which act in modern language is called "affiliation," by uniting with another lodge, he can not be so accepted or affiliated into its fellowship unless he brings a certificate of his previous acceptance or initiation in the lodge in which he was made.

There is an apparent confusion in the double sense in which the word acceptance or acception is used, which can only be removed by this interpretation, which explains the two kinds of acceptance referred to in the same article. This will hereafter be applied to an explanation of some interesting Masonic circumstances that occurred in the life of the celebrated antiquary Elias Ashmole.

One more point, however, in this important article must be first referred to.

It is prescribed that when a Mason is to be made or accepted, it must be in a lodge of at least five Free Masons, one of whom must be a Master or Warden, of the limit or division where the said lodge shall be kept. Masters and Wardens were therefore ranks (it does not follow that they were degrees) in whom alone was invested the prerogative of presiding at the making of Masons. It was not necessary that he should be the Master or Warden of the lodge where the initiation or acceptance was made. The lodge might, indeed, be a mere extemporary affair, consisting of five Free Masons called together for the especial purpose of accepting a new brother of the craft. But it was essential that a Free Mason, not a stranger brought from some other section of the country, but one residing or working in the vicinity, and who was not a mere Fellow, but who had reached the rank of a Master or a Warden, should be present and, of course, preside at the meeting.

Preston confirms this in a note in his *Illustrations of Masonry*, where he says :

"A sufficient number of Masons met together within a certain district, with the consent of the sheriff or chief magistrate of the place, were empowered, at this time, to make masons and practice the rites of Masonry without warrant of Constitution."<sup>1</sup>

The consent of the sheriff or chief magistrate which Preston supposes to be necessary to the making of a Mason is not required by the Harleian or any subsequent regulations which represent the Constitutions of the Masons' Company. The Halliwell poem and the

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<sup>1</sup>Preston, "Illustrations," Oliver's edition, p. 182, note.

Cooke MS., which closely follow it, do say that the sheriff of the county, the mayor of the city, and many knights and nobles are to be at the General Assembly. But I have endeavored to show that the Halliwell statutes belonged to a different organization of the craft.

Another expression in this 28th Harleian regulation elucidates an important point in the organization of the Masonic sodality at that time. Of the five Free-Masons who were required to be present at the acceptance of a candidate, one was to be a Master and Warden "and another of the trade of Free Masonry." Hence it follows that the other three might be non-Masons, or persons not belonging to the craft. This is the very best legal evidence that we could have that in the middle of the 17th century non-professional persons were admitted as honorary members into the fraternity. The Speculative element, as we now have it, was of course not yet introduced, but the craft did not consist exclusively of working Masons.

These explanations will enable us to understand the often-quoted passages from the *Diary of Elias Ashmole*, which without them would seem to bear contradictory meanings.

Mr. Ashmole says, under the date of October 16, 1646, at half past four in the afternoon :

"I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire with Colonel Henry Mainwaring of Karticham in Cheshire, the names of those that then were at the lodge, Mr. Richard Penket Warden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Richard Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam and Hugh Brewer."

The circumstances of the ceremony here detailed are strictly in accord with the regulations which were then in force and which were not long afterward incorporated in the Constitutions as these are preserved in the Harleian MS.

That manuscript says that at the acceptance of a Free-Mason there shall be "a Lodge of five Free Masons." The Landsdowne MS. says there should be "at least six or seven." The "new regulations" in the Harleian MS. reduced the number to five, which is the exact quorum required at the present day in Speculative Masonry for the admission of a Fellow Craft.

Of these five, one was to be a Master or Warden. And here we find Mr. Richard Penket acting as Warden. Another one of the five was to be "of the trade of Free Masonry." We know what respect was in those days paid to the distinction of ranks, so that

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the titles of Esquire and Gentleman were carefully observed, the former having the magic letters "Esq." affixed and the latter the letters "Mr." prefixed to his name, while the yeoman, merchant, or tradesman was entitled to neither, but was designated only by his simple name.

"He who can live without manual labor," says an old heraldic authority,<sup>1</sup> "or can support himself as a gentleman without interfering in any mechanic employment, is called Mr. and may write himself Gentleman."

As Ashmole was a distinguished herald and careful in observing the rules of precedency, we may safely conclude that "Mr. James Collier" and "Mr. Richard Sankey" were gentlemen and not professional Masons, while plain "Henry Littler, John Ellam and Hugh Brewer," who are recorded without the honorable prefix, were only workmen "of the trade of Free Masonry."

So far Ashmole had only been made a Free-Mason; that is, been received as a member of the Craft. According to the regulations another step was necessary before he could be accepted into the freedom and fellowship of the Company.

"No person shall hereafter be accepted a Free Mason," says the New Articles, "until he hath brought a certificate of the time of his acceptance from the lodge that accepted him;" and further, that "every person who is now a Free Mason shall bring to the Master a note of his acception, to the end the same may be enrolled in such priority of place as the person shall deserve and to the end the whole Company and Fellows may the better know each other."

And here is the way in which Ashmole obeyed this regulation, which was then in full force.

He writes in his Diary, under the date of March 10, 1682, about five o'clock in the afternoon, as follows:

"I received a summons to appear at a lodge to be held the next day at Masons Hall in London."

On the next day, or March 11th, he writes as follows:

"Accordingly I went and about noon was admitted into the fellowship of Free-Masons by Sir William Wilson, Knight, Captain Richard Borthwick, Mr. William Wodman, Mr. William Grey, Mr. Samuel Taylor and Mr. William Wise.

<sup>1</sup> "Laws of Honour," p. 286.



“ I was the senior fellow among them (it being thirty-five years since I was admitted) there was present besides myself the fellows afternamed. Mr. Thomas Wise, Master of the Masons-company this present year ; Mr. Thomas Shorthose, Mr. Thomas Shadbolt, — Waidssford, Esq. Mr. Nicholas Young, Mr. John Shorthose, Mr. William Hamon, Mr. John Thompson, and Mr. William Stanton.

“ We all dined at the Half-Moon Tavern in Cheapside, at a noble dinner prepared at the charge of the new-accepted Masons.”

To many who have read these two extracts from *Ashmole's Diary*, the eminent antiquary has appeared to involve himself in a contradiction by first stating that he was made a Mason at Warrington in the year 1646, and afterward that he was admitted into the fellowship of Free Masons in 1682.

But there is really no contradiction in these statements. The New Articles in the Harleian MS. afford the true explanation, which is entirely satisfactory.

In 1646, while Ashmole was on a visit to Lancashire, he was induced to become a Free Mason ; that is, as a non-professional member to unite himself with the Craft. This had been frequently done before by other distinguished men, and the regulations, which are not necessarily of the date of the manuscript, had provided for the admission or initiation of persons who were not workmen or professional Masons.

A lodge for the purpose had been called at Warrington. Whether this was a permanent lodge that was there existing or whether it was only a temporary one called together and presided over by a Warden of that district is immaterial. The passage in the *Diary* throws no light on the question. It was, however, most probably a temporary lodge, called together by Warden Penket for the sole purpose of admitting Ashmole and Mainwaring, or making them Free Masons. The regulations authorized this act. The only restrictions were that there should be five Free Masons present, one of whom was to be a Master or Warden and another a workman of the Craft or Operative Mason. All these restrictions were duly observed in the admission of Ashmole and his companion.

But this act, though it made him a Free Mason, did not admit him to a full fellowship in the Society. To accomplish this another step was necessary.

As persons were often made in temporary or occasional lodges, which were dissolved after they had performed the act of admitting new-comers, for which sole purpose they had been organized, it was necessary that the person so admitted should present a certificate of the time when and the place where he had been admitted or accepted, to some superior officer, who is called in the regulations "the Master of that limit and division where such lodge was kept;" and who was probably the Master Mason who presided over the Craft, who lived and worked in that section of the kingdom, or perhaps also the Master of the permanent lodge, composed of all the Craft in that division which assembled at stated periods.

This permanent lodge, to which all the Craft repaired, might have been called an "Assembly." If so that would account for the frequent use of the word "Assembly" in all the old manuscripts, to which every Mason was required to repair on due notice if it was within five or ten, or, as some say, within fifty miles of him. And this surmise will also explain the meaning of the regulation which says that no one, unless he produced a certificate of his previous acceptance, could be "admitted into any lodge or assembly," where the words "Lodge" and "Assembly" would seem to indicate two different kinds of Masonic congregation, the former referring to the lodges temporarily organized for special purposes, and the latter to the regular assemblage of Masons in a permanent body upon stated occasions and for the transaction of the general business of the Craft there congregated, and to which body the certificates were to be presented of those who had been accepted or initiated in the temporary lodge.

But Ashmole did not at the time, or at any time soon after, present such a certificate to the Master of that limit in Lancashire that he had been made a Free Mason in a lodge at Warrington on October 16, 1646. If he had done so we may be sure that he would have mentioned the fact in his Diary, which is so excessively minute in its details as to frequently make a record of matters absurdly unimportant.

Accordingly, though a Free Mason by virtue of his acceptance or making at Warrington, he was not admitted to the fellowship of the Craft, he was not "free of the Company," was not entitled to an entrance into any of its lodges or assemblies, nor could he take part in any of the proceedings of the sodality. He was a regularly made Free Mason, and that was all; he was in fact very much in the

isolated position of those who are called "unaffiliated Masons" in the present day. He had received initiation but had not applied for membership.

Thirty-five years afterward Ashmole did what he had neglected to do before, and perfected his relationship to the Craft. On March 11, 1682, he attended the meeting of a lodge held in Masons' Hall, the place of meeting of the Masons' Company. The lodge was thus held under the sanction of that Company. Mr. William Wise, the Master of the Company, was present, but is not spoken of as one of the members of the lodge. The lodge consisted of Sir William Wilson and six others. As Wilson is mentioned first, we may presume that he was the Master. By these seven Ashmole and some others (who it seems paid the scot for a dinner eaten on the occasion) were "admitted into the fellowship of Free Masons."

In 1646 he was made a Free Mason ; in 1682 he was admitted to the fellowship of the Society. Thenceforth he became not only a Free Mason but an Accepted Mason ; he was, in other words, by the ceremony performed at Masons' Hall, a "Free and Accepted Mason," and his name was enrolled in the parchment roll "kept for that purpose," that he and the company might "the better know each other."

The account of the acceptance of Elias Ashmole, recorded by himself and therefore of the most undoubted authenticity, when thus interpreted, supplies us with nearly all the details which are necessary to understand the usages of the Craft in respect to initiations and admissions in the 17th century. They will be more fully analyzed at the close of the present chapter. But it will be necessary first to refer to another authority of great importance on the same subject.

Robert Plott, who was the keeper of the Muscum presented by Elias Ashmole to the University of Oxford, wrote, and in 1686 published, *The Natural History of Staffordshire*, in which work he gives an account of the Masonic customs prevailing at that time in the country. Plott was not a Free Mason. "The evidence of Dr. Plott is extremely valuable," says Oliver, "because it shows the existence of Lodges of Masons in Staffordshire and the practice of certain ceremonies of initiation in the 17th century in accordance with the regulations laid down in the manuscript Constitution whose authenticity is thus confirmed."

Dr. Plott says that they had in Staffordshire a custom "of ad-

mitting men into the Society of Free Masons, that in the moorlands of this country seems to be of greater request than anywhere else, though I find the custom spread more or less all over the nation, for here I found persons of the most eminent quality, that did not disdain to be of this fellowship."

He then proceeds to relate and unfavorably to criticise the *Legend of the Craft*, which it is not necessary to quote. He afterward continues his account of the customs of the Masonic Society, in the following words :

"Into which Society, when they are admitted, they call a meeting (or *Lodg*, as they term it in some places), which must consist at least, of five or six of the *Ancients* of the *Order*, whom the candidates present with gloves, and so likewise to their wives, and entertain with a collation, according to the custom of the place. This ended they proceed to the *admission* of them, which chiefly consists in the communication of certain secret signs, whereby they are known to one another all over the nation, by which means they have maintainance whither ever they travel ; for if any man appear, though altogether unknown, that can show any of these signs to a fellow of the society, whom they otherwise call an Accepted Mason, he is obliged, presently to come to him, from what company or place soever he be in ; nay, though from the top of a steeple, what hazard or inconvenience soever he run, to know his pleasure and assist him ; viz., if he want work he is bound to find him some ; or if he can not do that to give him money or otherwise support him till work can be had, which is one of their articles ; and it is another that they advise the Masters they work for, according to the best of their skill acquainting them with the goodness or badness of their materials ; and if they be any way out in the contrivance of the buildings, modestly to rectify them in it, that Masonry be not dishonoured ; and many such like that are commonly known ; but some others they have (to which they are sworn after their fashion) that none know but themselves."<sup>1</sup>

There is another document of far more importance than those which have been cited, and which gives a more complete description of the usages of the Craft in the 17th century. I refer to the old record which has been designated as the Sloane MS. No. 3329.

t, "Natural History of Staffordshire," chap. viii., p. 316.

Of the three copies of the Constitutions which are preserved in the British Museum and known as the Sloane MS. the one numbered 3329 is by far the most valuable and interesting. A part of it was inserted by Mr. Findel in the Appendix to his *History of Freemasonry*. But the complete text was published by Bro. Hughan in the *Voice of Masonry* for October, 1872, and in the *National Freemason* for April, 1873.

There has been some doubt about the exact date of the manuscript. Hughan thinks it was written between 1640 and 1700. Messrs. Bond and Sims, of the British Museum, experts in old manuscripts, suppose that its date is "probably of the beginning of the 18th century." Bro. Woodford mentions a great authority in manuscripts, but he does not give the name, who declares it to be previous to the middle of the 17th century. Finally, Findel thinks it originated at the end of the 17th century, and that "it was found among the papers which Dr. Plott left behind him on his death, and was one of the sources whence his communications on Freemasonry were derived."

But if Plott used this manuscript in writing his article on Freemasonry, of which there is certainly very strong internal evidence, then the date of the manuscript could not have been later than 1685, for he published his book in 1686, and it was most probably written some time before.

We are safe then, I think, in assuming the middle of the 17th century as the approximate date of the Sloane MS.

It differs from all the other manuscripts in containing neither the Ordinances nor the *Legend of the Craft*. It is simply a description of the Ritual of the Society of Operative Masons as practiced at the period when it was written, namely, as is conjectured, about the middle of the 17th century.

From all these important documents—the *Harleian Constitutions*, the *Diary of Ashmole*, the narrative of Dr. Plott, and the Sloane MS.—collated with each other and confirming each other, we are enabled to form a very accurate notion of what were the usages of the Craft in the 17th century, and approximately in the 16th and 15th centuries. A careful analysis will lead to the following results :

There was an incorporated Company of Masons, just as there were incorporated companies of other trades and crafts, such as the

Mercers, the Drapers, the Carpenters, the Smiths, etc. As this Company had been originally chartered in 1410, it must have exercised its influence over the Craft from that early period, and the early manuscript Constitutions were doubtless copies of its Guild Book of Laws and Records; but it is not mentioned by name in any of the manuscripts anterior to the middle of the 17th century. There is a frequent allusion to lodges as the place where Masters and Fellows worked, and there are references to an Assembly, which, from the language used, must have been a congregation of several Masters and Fellows. But there is no express recognition of the Company in any manuscript before the Harleian. From that time forth the Masons' Company seems to have constituted the head of the Craft in a certain district. There were several of these companies in different cities, but the principal one was that at London.

However or wherever a person was admitted as a Free Mason, he could only be considered as "Accepted" when he had reported the fact to some superior authority in the district where he had been made, whereupon his name was enrolled in a parchment book or roll.

There were, besides these companies, lodges in various parts of the country. Some of these lodges, at least toward the close of the century, were permanent bodies. But many were merely extemporaneously organized for the purpose of initiating a candidate, who was afterward reported to the Master of the limit or division in which the lodge had been held.

There was some ceremony, though a very brief one, at the time of admitting a newly made brother. There were secret signs and words, and an oath of secrecy and fidelity, but there are no documents extant to enable us to determine the nature of the ceremony of initiation.

We have no evidence of the existence of any degrees of initiation. Indeed, Masonic scholars have now come very generally to the conclusion that what are called in the modern rituals the First, Second, and Third Degrees were the later invention of the Speculative Free Masons of the 18th century. But this subject will hereafter be discussed at length in a chapter exclusively devoted to its consideration.

On the whole it will be readily seen that the sodalities of the Operative Masons of the 17th and preceding centuries were the

germ which afterward was developed in the 18th century into the full fruit of Speculative Masonry. The *Harleian Constitutions* present us with the basis of the laws which still govern the institution, the Diary which details Ashmole's reception and Plott's narrative prove that many usages of the present day were in existence at that period, and from the Sloane MS. we learn that certain points of esoteric instruction which prevailed in the 17th century have been incorporated, with necessary modifications of course, into the modern rituals. By comparing the Sloane document with the rituals that were published soon after the Revival, in 1717, and these again with those of the present day, we will be able to see how the later and perfected system has been gradually developed out of the primitive one of the middle of the 17th century, and we will be justified in believing that the same system was in existence at a much earlier period.

Not only, then, is there no difficulty in tracing the connection between the lodges of Operative Masons which were existing before the year 1717 with those of the non-operative Free Masons who, in that year, established the Grand Lodge of England, but it is absolutely impossible to exclude from our minds the conviction that there has been a regular and distinct progression by which the one became merged in the other.

We have now arrived at that period in the history of English Freemasonry which brings us into direct contact with the events that immediately preceded and accompanied the organization of the Grand Lodge of England, or, as it has been also called, the Revival of Masonry, in 1717.

But before that subject can be discussed it will be necessary for us to return, in our historical inquiries, to the events connected with the transmission of Masonry in the sister kingdom of Scotland and afterward on the Continent of Europe, and more especially to the Traveling Freemasons, who came from Lombardy in the 10th century, and to the later organization of the Stonemasons of Germany, interesting and prolific subjects which will require several chapters for their treatment.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EARLY MASONRY IN SCOTLAND



HAT the tradition of York is to the Freemasons of England, that of Kilwinning is to the Masons of Scotland. The story which traces the birth of the Order to the celebrated Abbey of Kilwinning was for many years accepted as the authentic history of Scottish Masonry.

Thus Sir John Sinclair, in his *Statistical Account of Scotland*, states that "a number of Freemasons came from the continent to build a monastery at Kilwinning and with them an architect or Master Mason to superintend and carry on the work. This architect resided at Kilwinning, and being a *gude* and *true* Mason, intimately acquainted with all the arts and parts of Masonry, known on the continent, was chosen Master of the meetings of the brethren all over Scotland. He gave rules for the conduct of the brethren at these meetings, and decided finally in appeals from all the other meetings or lodges in Scotland."<sup>1</sup>

This tradition has been accepted by the author of Laurie's *History*, who says that "Freemasonry was introduced into Scotland by those architects who built the Abbey of Kilwinning."<sup>2</sup> He connects those architects with the trading association of artists who were engaged in the construction of religious buildings on the Continent, under the patronage of the Pope, and who provided builders for both England and Scotland. And he suggests as an evidence that Masonry was introduced into Scotland by these foreign workmen the fact that in a town in Scotland where there is an elegant abbey, he had "often heard that it was erected by a company of industrious men who spoke in a foreign language and lived separately from the town's people."

<sup>1</sup> Vol. xi., art. "Kilwinning."

<sup>2</sup> "History of Freemasonry," p. 89.



The Abbey of Kilwinning, which has been claimed as the birth-place of Masonry in Scotland, was situated in the town of the same name, and in the county of Ayr, on the southwestern coast of Scotland. It was founded by Hugh de Morville, High Constable of Scotland, in the year 1157. The abbey is now and has long been in ruins, though what now remains of it attests, says Mr. Robert Wylie, who has written a *History of the Mother Lodge, Kilwinning*, "the zeal and opulence of its founder, and furnishes indubitable evidence, fragmentary as it is, of its having been one of the most splendid examples of Gothic art in Scotland."

It is only very recently that anyone has attempted to deny the authenticity of the Legend which traces the introduction of Freemasonry into Scotland to the workmen who came over in the 12th century to construct the Abbey of Kilwinning.

Bro. D. Murray Lyon has attacked the tradition, together with some others connected with Scottish Masonry, all of which he deems destitute of historical support.

The tradition, however, like that of York among the English Masons, has not wanted its zealous supporters among the Scottish brethren, and more especially among the members of the Kilwinning, which claims to have a legitimate descent from the primitive lodge which was established in the 12th century by the foreign architect who settled in the town of Kilwinning.

It has, however, been attempted to trace the introduction of the Order into Scotland to a much earlier period, and one writer, cited by Wylie with apparent approval, says that Scotland can boast of many noble remains of the ancient Roman buildings which plainly evince that the Romans when they entered the country brought along with them some of their best designers and operative masons, who were employed in rearing those noble fabrics of which we can at this day trace the remains. And it is asserted that these Roman builders communicated to the natives and left behind them a predilection for and a knowledge of Masonry which have descended from them to the present generation.<sup>1</sup>

It is very probable that more is here claimed than can be authenticated by history. The influences exerted upon English architecture by the Roman colleges of Masons is very patent, as has

<sup>1</sup> Wylie, "History of the Mother Lodge, Kilwinning," p. 47.

been already shown. The Romans had been enabled to make for centuries a home in England, had introduced into it their arts of civilization, and made it in every respect a Roman colony.

But Scotland had never been completely subjugated by the Roman arms ; the incursions of the legions were altogether of a predatory nature, nor are there many evidences from Roman remains that the Roman artists had been enabled to make, or had even attempted to make, the same impression on the warlike Scots and Picts that they had been enabled to produce in the more docile and more easily civilized inhabitants of the southern part of the island.

The theory which assigns the introduction of Freemasonry into Scotland to the workmen who came over from England or from the Continent in the 12th century, and erected the religious buildings at Kilwinning, Melrose, Glasgow, and other places, is a much more plausible one. The bodies of Traveling Freemasons were at that time in existence, and we know that they were perambulating the Continent and erecting ecclesiastical edifices ; we know too that at that period there were corporations or guilds of Masons in England ; and it is a very fair deduction from historical reasoning, though there be no historical records to confirm it, that the churches and abbeys which were erected in Scotland in the 12th and 13th centuries must have been the work of Freemasons who came partly from England and partly from the Continent.

Bro. D. Murray Lyon, the Historian of the Lodge of Edinburgh, has said that "not the slightest vestige of authentic evidence has ever been adduced in support of the legends in regard to the time and place of the institution of the first Scotch Masonic Lodge."<sup>1</sup> This is, however, a merely local question affecting the claims to precedency on the roll of the Grand Lodge, and must not be mixed up with the question of the introduction of the Freemasons into Scotland as an organized society of builders. I can not consider it as quite apocryphal to assign this to the time when religious establishments were patronized by King David I., which was toward the close of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century.

The Mother Kilwinning Lodge, at Kilwinning, the St. Mary's Chapel Lodge, at Edinburgh, and the Freeman St. John's, at Glasgow, have each preferred the claim that it is the oldest lodge in

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 2.

Scotland. Each has its proofs and each has its adherents, and the controversy has at times waxed warm among the Scottish Masons. Yet, as I have already said, it is, as a matter of general history, of but little importance.

We have seen that we are almost compelled to suppose that the institution of Masonry was introduced into Scotland by the builders who were engaged in the erection of religious houses from the 11th to the 13th centuries. We can not get over the belief that these builders formed a part of the fraternity which already existed in the Continent of Europe and in England, and who were then engaged in the same occupation of constructing cathedrals and monasteries.

Knowing from other evidence what was the usage of these Traveling Freemasons, and that wherever they were engaged in the labors of their Craft they established lodges, we are again forced to the belief that in Scotland they followed the usages they had adopted elsewhere, and erected their lodges there also.

Doubtless there is no authentic evidence that the modern lodges at Glasgow, at Kilwinning, and at Edinburgh were the legitimate and uninterrupted successors of those which were established by the Masons who were engaged in the construction of the Cathedral, the Abbey, and Holyrood; indeed it is very probable that they are not. Nor is there any historical material which will enable us to determine which of these primitive lodges was first established by the mediæval builders. The probability is, as Bro. Lyon has suggested, that the erection of the earliest Scottish lodges was a nearly simultaneous occurrence, as wherever a body of mediæval Masons were employed there also were the elements to constitute a lodge.<sup>1</sup>

The facts, therefore, would appear to be that lodges must have existed in Scotland from the time when those edifices were being erected, and that the Freemasons who came over from the Continent to erect those edifices brought with them the Freemasonry of the Continent.

We can not indeed prove these facts by historical records of undoubted authenticity, but we can advance no reason for denying or doubting their probability.

Ascribing the first introduction of Freemasonry into Scotland

to the continental Masons, we have some evidence that at a later period there was a considerable influence exercised by England on Scottish Masonry. This is apparent from the fact that the Constitutions used in the Kilwinning Lodge, and in others established by it in the middle of the 17th century, and known as the "Edinburgh Kilwinning MS.," is a nearly exact copy of an English manuscript, and contains a charge to be "liegemen to the King of England, without treason or other falsehood."

This manuscript, which was kept in the archives of the Kilwinning Lodge, and known, says Lyon, as "the old buck," was frequently copied, and the copies sold by the Lodge of Kilwinning to those lodges which had received charters from it.

The fact that these Constitutions require allegiance to the King of England, that the legend which refers to the introduction of Masonry into England, and its subsequent expansion, dwells on the patronage extended to the Craft by the English Kings, and finally that the narrative contains no allusion to the Kilwinning or another Scottish legend, induce Brothers Hughan and Lyon to come to the conclusion that the manuscript was brought from England into Scotland, and that its adoption by the Kilwinning Lodge, and by those which were chartered by it, proves that the Masonry of England exercised in the middle of the 17th century a very great influence over that of Scotland, an influence which, as it will be seen, was still further exerted in after times in assimilating the rituals and ceremonial usages of the two countries.

This English influence on Scotch lodges at so early a period is a fact of great importance in the history of Masonry. From it is to be presumed that there was a great intimacy and frequent communication between the Freemasons of the two countries. It is to be presumed also that there was a great similarity—indeed, in many respects, an identity—of usages in Scotland and England. Therefore we may with great safety apply what we know of the Masonry of one country to that of another, where we have no other knowledge but that which is derived from such a collation.

Now, it is a well-known fact that while the literature of English Masonry is exceedingly deficient in any authentic records of lodges which existed anterior to the Revival of 1717, the Scottish lodges have preserved original minutes or records of their proceedings as far back as the end of the 16th century.

Lyon, in his *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh*, has torn away, with an unsparing and relentless hand, the meretricious garments which the imaginations of Anderson and Brewster (Lawrie's edition) had cast around the statute of Scottish Masonic history. It will not be safe in writing such a history to lose sight of the incisive criticism of Lyon and trust to the deceptive and fallacious authority of earlier historians.

At the beginning of the 12th century, Masons had been imported into Scotland from Strasburg, in Germany, for the purpose of building Holyrood House; in the middle of the same century other Masons were engaged in erecting Kilwinning Abbey. From these epochs historians have been wont to date the origin of Scottish Masonry. We have no documents referring to that early period, but we know that King David I., who then reigned, was what Anderson would call a "great patron of Masonry," and that he nearly beggared the kingdom by the prodigality with which he invested its resources in the construction of religious edifices.

But it is not until we reach the commencement of the 15th century that we begin to find any records which seem to indicate the existence of a craft or guild like that which we know at the same time existed in England. It is not asserted here that there were no lodges or guild meetings in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries. Judging from the condition of things in England at that time, we may conclude that guilds or lodges of Masons were in existence also in Scotland, but we have no documentary evidence of any authentic value to sustain the supposition.

The first period in which Freemasonry in Scotland begins to assume an historic form is the beginning of the 15th century.

James I. had been confined as prisoner in England from the year 1406 to 1424. During those eighteen years of his enforced absence, the kingdom had been greatly harassed by the contentions of what were called "leagues" or "bands" among the craftsmen of the different trades, including the Masons, and which might be compared to the modern trades-unions and strikes.

When James I. returned to Scotland, in 1424, he at once began to reform the abuses which had resulted from these illegal confederacies. He suppressed the "leagues," and instituted the office of "Deacon" or "Master-man," as a method of preserving the community from the frauds of the crafts. For this purpose the "Dea-

cons" were authorized, by act of Parliament, to regulate the works of all the crafts, to establish the rate of wages, and to punish any who should transgress the law.

But these powers having been found to be in many instances oppressive to the people and an encroachment on the prerogatives of the municipal authorities, were, after a year's trial, abrogated, and a new class of officials was instituted, called "Wardens," one of whom was selected from each trade. These Wardens were not the representatives of the crafts, but had a greater affinity with the town-councils of each burgh, whose prerogatives in regulating work and wages they exercised.

Now the Masons who originally came to Scotland in the 12th century from the Continent and from England had enjoyed the privilege from the Pope of regulating their own concerns and prescribing their own wages. This privilege they must of course have communicated to their successors in Scotland, and it was there apparently exercised, up to and including the time of the institution of Deacons, under whom the trade and craft unions exercised the same prerogative.

But when the Deaconship was abolished, and Wardens established as representatives of the municipal authorities, this right of regulating their own concerns was taken from the craft.

To this there was naturally resistance, and Lyon tells us that "the Deacons continued holding meetings of their respective crafts, for the purpose doubtless of keeping alive the embers of discontent at their degraded position and organizing the means for carrying on the struggle, not only to regain independence of action in trade affairs but also to acquire a political status in the country."<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing in the history of the reigns of the two succeeding kings, James II. and III., that connects them with the Masonic fraternity. None of the acts of the Scottish Parliament, during these two reigns, has any special reference to the Craft of Masons. James III. is said indeed to have had "a passionate attachment for magnificent buildings." Beyond this, says Lyon, "his name can not in any special degree be associated with Masons." But in truth, though documentary evidence of particular facts may be wanting, this attachment to magnificent edifices must have led the monarch

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 3.

to have bestowed his patronage upon that fraternity whose duty it was to erect them.

Brewster (Lawrie's edition) has sought to give an importance to the reign of James II., by the statement that that monarch had invested the Earl of Orkney and Caithness with the dignity of "Grand Master" of the Masons of Scotland, and subsequently made the office hereditary in his heirs and successors in the barony of Roslin.

This statement, long accepted by Masonic writers and by all the Masons of Scotland as a veritable fact, has been proved by more recent researches to be wholly unsupported by historic evidence and even to be contradicted by those authentic documents which are known as the "St. Clair Charters."

There are two Charters bearing this name, which were once the property of Mr. Alexander Deuchar, and were purchased at the sale of his library by Dr. David Laing of the Signet Library, and exchanged by him for other documents with Professor Aytoun of the University of Edinburgh, who presented them to the Grand Lodge of Scotland, in whose archives they are still preserved. The manuscripts have been carefully examined, and their authenticity is without doubt.

The date of the first of these Manuscripts is not given, but from internal and other evidence it seems presumable that it was written between the years 1600 and 1601.

It is signed by William Schaw as "Master of Work" and by several Masons of Edinburgh and various towns in Scotland.

It is unnecessary to give the text of the manuscript, as it has been printed by Lawrie, by Lyon, and by some others, but its substance may be cited as follows :

It begins by stating that the Lords of Roslin have from "age to age" been patrons and protectors of the Masons of Scotland and of their privileges, and as such have been obeyed and acknowledged. That within a few years past this position has from sloth and negligence been allowed to go out of use, whereby the Lord of Roslin has been lying out of his just rights and the Craft been destitute of a patron and protector, and other evils have arisen ; wherefore it goes on to say that, not being able to wait on the tedious and expensive courses of the ordinary courts, the signers, in behalf of all the Craft and with their consent, agree that William Sinclair of

Roslin and his heirs shall obtain at the hands of the King liberty, freedom, and jurisdiction upon them and their successors, in all times to come, so that he shall be acknowledged by the Craft as their patron and judge under the King.

The second charter, which purports to be issued by the Deacons, Masters, and Freemen of the Masons and Hammermen of Scotland, is supposed by Lyon, with good reason, to have been written in the year 1628.

This document is confirmatory of the other, making the same statement of the recognition of the Sinclairs of Roslin as patrons and protectors of the Scottish Craft, but adding an additional fact, which will hereafter be referred to.

Upon this authority Brewster has said, in Lawrie's *History*, that King James II. had granted to William St. Clair, Earl of Orkney and Caithness, Baron of Roslin, the office of Grand Master, and made it hereditary to his heirs and successors in the barony of Roslin; and he adds that "the Barons of Roslyn, as hereditary Grand Masters of Scotland, held their principal annual meetings at Kilwinning."

Anderson had previously asserted that James I. had instituted the office of Grand Master, who was to be chosen by the Grand Lodge, and this, he says, "is the tradition of the old Scottish Masons and found in their records."

The language of Anderson shows that he was not acquainted with the St. Clair Charters, as they are called, because if he had seen them it is not likely that he would have omitted to take notice of the important point of hereditary occupation. But the authority of Anderson as an authentic historian is of so little value that we need not discuss the question whether any such tradition ever existed.

The statement made in Lawrie's *History* is, however, professedly based on the authority of the St. Clair Charters. This statement has been impugned by James Maidment in his *Genealogie of the Saint Clairs of Rosslyn*, by Lyon in his *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh*, and by several other writers.

As the statement made in Lawrie's work depends for its verity or its fallacy on the question whether these charters have been faithfully interpreted or not, it will be necessary in making the issue to investigate more particularly the express language which is used in these documents.



The words of the first charter, literally translated from the Scottish dialect of the original, are as follows :

“ We, Deacons, Masters, and Freemen of the Masons within the realm of Scotland, with express consent and assent of William Schaw, Master of Work to our Sovereign Lord, forasmuch as from age to age it has been observed among us that the Lords of Roslin have ever been patrons and protectors of us and our privileges, likewise our predecessors have obeyed and acknowledged them as patrons and protectors, while through negligence and sloth the same has past out of use. . . . We, for ourselves and in the name of all our brethren and craftsmen, consent to the aforesaid agreement and consent that William St. Clair, now of Roslin, for himself and his heirs, shall purchase and obtain, at the hands of our Sovereign Lord, liberty, freedom, and jurisdiction upon us and our successors, in all times coming, as patrons and judges to us and all the professors of our craft within this realm, . . . so that hereafter we may acknowledge him and his heirs as our patron and judge under our Sovereign Lord, without appeal or declination from his judgment, and with power to the said William to depute one or more judges under him, and to use such ample and large jurisdiction upon us and our successors, in town and in country, as it shall please our Sovereign Lord to grant to him and his heirs.”

The second charter is but a repetition of the statements of the first, with a few additional details which make it a longer document. It approves and confirms the former “letter of jurisdiction and liberty made and subscribed by our brethren and his highness,<sup>1</sup> formerly Master of Work for the time to the said William St. Clair of Roslin.”

There is, however, one statement not to be found in the first charter, and which is of much importance. It is stated that the St. Clairs of Roslin had letters of protection and of other rights which were “granted to them by his majesty’s most noble progenitors of worthy memory, which, with sundry others of the Lord of Roslin’s writings, were consumed and burnt in a flame of fire within the castle of Roslin in the year .”

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lyon objects to the opinion that Schaw was an Operative Mason and thinks that he was of higher social position and merely an honorary member of the Craft. If there were no other evidence to sustain Bro. Lyon in this view, the fact that the appellation of “highness,” as here applied to him, would be sufficient to prove its accuracy.

The last two words are "in an," evidently meaning "in anno," but being at the end of the line, the two last letters with the date have been apparently torn or worn off from the manuscript. We can from this only gather the fact that there was a tradition among the Scottish Masons that some one of the Kings of Scotland, previous to James VI., in whose reign the manuscript was undoubtedly written, had by letters patent granted to the Lords of Roslin the patronage and protection of the Craft in Scotland.

Now, it is very evident that Brewster had no authority from these charters to make the statement that James II. had appointed the Barons of Roslin hereditary Grand Masters of Scotland. There is not the remotest allusion in either of these documents to the use of such a title. One of William Schaw's titles was "Chief Master of Masons," but that of "Grand Master" was never recognized in Scotland until one was elected in 1731 by the Grand Lodge of Edinburgh.

But the charters do not themselves declare that the Sinclairs of Roslin had received any such appointment from the King. It is true that the second charter does refer to the fact that letters of protection had been granted by the predecessors of James VI., which letters were burnt in a fire that took place at Roslin Castle at a time the date of which has been lost.

On this subject it has very properly been asked why was the fact of the burning of these papers not stated in the first charter; how is it that there is no certain knowledge of the year when this fire took place; and how was it that while all the other charters belonging to the house of Roslyn were preserved these alone were consumed by this fatal fire?

When the last Roslin resigned in the year 1736 his hereditary rights as patron, he certainly did allude to the possibility that some King of Scotland may have granted a charter to his predecessors. But he expressly designates those predecessors as William St. Clair and his son, Sir William, the very persons who are mentioned in the two charters as deriving their rights from the Masons in the beginning of the 17th century. But there is no evidence in his letter of resignation that he was at all acquainted with any charter granted by James II. to the Earls of Orkney and Barons of Roslin.

On the whole, I think we may explain this story of the St. Clair Charters in the following way:

At the beginning of the 17th century there was possibly a tradition, unsupported, however, by any historical evidence, that the St. Clairs of Roslin had been the hereditary patrons and protectors of the Craft of Masons in Scotland.

In the year 1601, when William Schaw was the "Chief Mason" and "Master of the Work," the St. Clairs, if they had ever exercised their patronage and protection, had ceased to do so.

The Masons needing at that time such a patron, designated William St. Clair as such, and to give a greater prestige to the position, either invented a tradition that the office had been hereditary in the family of the St. Clairs or repeated one that already existed.

About thirty years afterward, the Masons of Scotland renewed and confirmed the appointment of Sir William St. Clair, the son of the one who had received the appointment in 1601. And now, in accordance with the unhappy method of treating Masonic documents which seems always to have prevailed whenever it was necessary to make a point, the writers of the second charter changed the tradition which in the first charter was to the effect that the Masons had always appointed the St. Clairs as their patrons, and asserted that the appointment had been given at an early period by one of the Scottish Kings. This was a falsification of the original tradition and must be rejected.

It was, however, accepted by Sir David Brewster and has until recently been recognized as a part of the authentic history of Scottish Masonry.

I think there can be no doubt that the St. Clairs accepted the honorable position of patrons of Scotch Masonry which had been bestowed upon them in 1601 and retained the office until it was finally vacated in 1736 by William St. Clair, who resigned all claim or pretense that he had to any hereditary right to be "patron, protector, judge or Master of the Masons in Scotland." Upon this the Grand Lodge of Scotland, which had then been duly formed, first adopted for their presiding officer, under the influence of the example of the Grand Lodge of England, the title of "Grand Master" and elected St. Clair to the office.

Looking back to the 12th century, when Kilwinning Abbey, Glasgow Cathedral, and Holyrood and other religious houses were built by Freemasons brought over from England and from the Continent, we are to suppose, for we are without documentary informa-

tion, that the Masons of that and the succeeding centuries up to the end of the 16th century must have observed the usages and customs of the English and Continental Masons.

In the reigns of James IV. and V., the statutes of Parliament show that there were continual controversies between the Masons and the public authorities, the former seeking to enlarge their privileges and the latter to restrict them. When Mary ascended the throne she found the Masons suffering under an act passed during the regency which suppressed the Deaconry, and which with previous ones that forbade their meetings in "private conventions" or framing statutes, seemed to have deprived the Masons of almost all their prerogatives.

All these laws Queen Mary abolished, and granted letters under the Great Seal, which restored the office of Deacon, confirmed the Craft in the privilege of self-government, in the observance of the customs and the exercise of the prerogatives which they had formerly enjoyed.<sup>1</sup>

During the reign of James VI. we find a recognized connection between the Sovereign and the Craft, the office of Warden and that of Master of the Works, being made by the King's authority.

It is at this period that we begin to find records or minutes of lodges and statutes well authenticated, by which we are enabled to form a correct judgment of the condition and the customs of the Craft in Scotland at that early period.

In this respect Scotland has the advantage of England, where we find no authentic records of any lodge until the 18th century, while the first minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh date back to the year 1598.

A very fair analysis of the early minutes of the Scottish lodges, and especially of the Lodge of Edinburgh, has been given by Bro. D. Murray Lyon in his valuable history of that Lodge. Whoever expects to write a faithful history of Freemasonry in Scotland must depend on that work as almost the only source of authentic facts. As histories of the early period the imaginative illustrations of Anderson's, and of Lawrie's edition, are almost utterly valueless.

The minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh, or St. Mary's Chapel, extend from December 28, 1598, to November 29, 1869. They are

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<sup>1</sup> Lyon, "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 5.

contained in six volumes, which are in an excellent state of preservation, with comparatively very few omissions. The first and second volumes, which include the space of one hundred and sixty-three years, that is, from 1598 to 1761, with a hiatus of only thirteen years, supply an ample store of authentic materials for early Scotch Masonic history.

The first volume contains a copy of what are called "The Schaw Statutes," the earliest Constitutions extant of Scotch Freemasonry. The date of this document is December 28, 1598. They are entitled "The Statutes and Ordinances to be observed by all the Master Masons within this realm ; set down by William Schaw, Master of Work to his Majesty and General Warden of the said Craft with the consent of the Masters hereafter specified."<sup>1</sup>

Of these statutes, the most important for understanding the true condition and usages of the Masonic Craft of Scotland in the 17th century are the following :

The first point intimates that the ordinances thereafter prescribed are but a continuation of those which had previously prevailed, but of these no copy is in existence.

The second point requires them "to be true to one another, and to live charitably together." This is in exact accord with the guild spirit, to be found in all the old English Constitutions.

The third enjoins obedience "to their Wardens, Deacons, and Masters in all things concerning their Craft."

The fourth directs them to be honest, faithful, and diligent, and to deal uprightly with the Masters or owners of the work in whatsoever they shall take in hand. This is evidently a transcript from the English Constitutions.

The fifth point prescribes that no one shall take in hand any work which he is not able duly to perform. This is the same as the regulation in the English Constitution, but the Schaw statutes direct the compensation that is to be made for an infraction of the rule.

The sixth provides that no Master shall take another one's work from him, after the latter has made a contract with the owner

<sup>1</sup> In quoting from these statutes, from the minutes of lodges or any other documents, for the convenience of the English reader, the Scottish dialect of the originals has been translated into the vernacular, but with literal exactness. The object has been to impart the meaning, and not merely to preserve the original phraseology.

of the work (who in the English Constitutions is called "the lord"), under a penalty of forty pounds.

The seventh point is that none shall finish any work begun, and not completed by another, until the latter has received his pay for what he has done.

The eighth point provides for the election by the Masters of every lodge of a Warden to take charge of the lodge, whose election is to be approved by the Warden-General.

The ninth point directs that no Master shall take more than three apprentices unless with the consent of the Wardens, Deacons, and Masters of the shriffalty (district) where the apprentice dwells.

The tenth point is that no apprentice shall be taken for less than seven years, nor shall that apprentice be made a brother and fellow of the Craft until he has served seven years more after the expiration of his term of apprenticeship, unless by the special license of the Wardens, Deacons, and Masters assembled for that purpose, nor without a sufficient trial of his worthiness, qualifications, and skill.

The eleventh point makes it unlawful for a Master to sell his apprentice to any other Master or to dispense with the years of his apprenticeship by selling them to the apprentice himself. The apprentice was to fulfil the full term of his servitude with his original Master.

By the twelfth point the Master, when he received an apprentice, was to notify the fact to the Warden of the lodge, so that his name and the day of his reception might be properly enrolled in the book of the lodge.

The thirteenth point prescribed that the names of the apprentices should be enrolled in the order of the time of their reception.

By the fourteenth point a Master or Fellow was to be received or admitted only in the presence of six Masters and two Entered Apprentices, the Warden of the lodge being one of the six ; the time of the reception and the name and mark of the Master or Fellow were to be enrolled in the lodge book, together with the names of the six Masters and two apprentices who received him and the names of the "intendars" or persons chosen to give him instruction. Nor was he to be admitted without an "assay" or specimen of his work and a sufficient trial of his skill and worthiness.

By the fifteenth no Master was to do any work under the charge or command of any other craftsman.

The sixteenth strictly prohibited all work with cowans.

The seventeenth forbade an apprentice to accept any work beyond a certain amount without the license of the Masters or Warden.

By the eighteenth all disputes were to be referred for reconciliation to the Wardens or Deacons of the lodge.

The nineteenth provided for the careful erection of scaffolds and footways so as to prevent any danger or injury to the workmen.

By the twentieth apprentices who had ran away from their Masters were not to be received or employed by other Masters.

The twenty-first commended all the craftsmen to come to the meeting when duly warned of the time and place.

The twenty-second point required all Masters who were summoned to the Assembly to swear under "a great oath" not to conceal the wrongs or faults done to each other nor to the owners of the works on which they were employed.

The twenty-third and last point prescribed that all the fines and penalties inflicted for a violation of these ordinances should be collected by the Wardens, Deacons, and Masters of the lodges and distributed according to their judgment for pious uses.

Bro. Lyon very properly suggests that this code of laws was applicable only to Operative Masons. This is certainly true, but so also were all the Constitutions of the English Craft and the Ordinances of the German and French Masons. Originally Freemasonry was an exclusively operative institution. But out of it grew the present Speculative system, in all these countries. To understand, then, the growth of the one out of the other, it is necessary to examine these constitutions and the minutes of the Operative lodges, of which latter Scotland only supplies us with authentic materials.

The great resemblance between the statutes of Schaw and the early English Constitutions indicates very clearly the close connection that existed between the two bodies of craftsmen in these countries, and leaves us in no doubt that both derived their laws and their customs from a common source, namely, that body of architects and builders who sprang up out of the Roman Colleges of Artificers and in time passed over into the Traveling Freemasons of Lombardy, who disseminated their skill and the principles of their profession over all Europe and to its remotest islands.

Having thus traced the rise of Masonry in Scotland to the builders who came over in the 12th century from the Continent, and perhaps from England, to be employed in the construction of religious houses at Kilwinning, at Glasgow, at Edinburgh, and other places, and having shown the condition of the Craft, so far as the great dearth of materials would permit, between that period and the year 1598, when the Schaw Statutes were enacted, we are next to inquire into the customs and usages of the Scottish Craft in the 17th century and until the organization of the Speculative Grand Lodge of Scotland in the year 1736. In performing a similar task in reference to the Masons of England, we were restricted for our sources of information to the manuscript Constitutions which could supply us only with logical deductions and suggestions, which made our narrative more a plausible conjecture than an absolute certainty.

But in tracing the customs and usages of the Scottish Craft in the 17th century, we are enabled to take as guides the minutes of the Operative lodges which, unlike those of England, have been preserved from the early date of the last years of the 16th century, and which have been collected and published by Bro. D. Murray Lyon in his most valuable *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh*, a work to which, in the following chapter, I shall almost wholly confine myself for facts, though not always concurring in his views and deductions. The facts are incontrovertible and authentic—the deductions, whether they be his or mine, may be erroneous, and their acceptance must be left to the reader's judgment.



## CHAPTER XIV

### CUSTOMS OF THE SCOTTISH MASONS IN THE 17TH CENTURY



THE Masons of the 16th century in Scotland appear to have been divided into two classes, the Incorporations and the Lodges. These, although not exactly similar to the Masons' Company and the lodges of England, may be considered as in some degree analogous.

In 1475 the Mayor and Town Council of Edinburgh chartered the Incorporation of Masons and Wrights. In this body two Masons and two Wrights were selected and sworn to see that all work was properly done, to examine all new-comers into the town who were seeking employment, to make the necessary regulations for the reception and government of apprentices, to settle disputes between the craftsmen, to bury the dead, and generally to make laws for the two trades of Masons and Wrights.

Incorporations were also invested in Glasgow and other cities with the same prerogatives. Controversies repeatedly and naturally arose between these Incorporations and the Lodges with whose privileges and regulations they sought to interfere. But early in the 17th century the former ceased to exercise some of their offensive prerogatives, and especially that of receiving and admitting Fellows of the Mason's Craft. But as Lyon justly observes, the fact that Wrights were present with Masons at the passing of apprentices to the rank of Fellow, favors the opinion that the ceremony of passing was simply a testing of the candidate's fitness for employment as a journeyman.

But the Incorporations were really extraneous bodies having their origin in the municipal spirit of interference. In investigating the Masonic usages and customs of the 17th century we must look really to the lodges and to what is suggested or developed of them in the Schaw and other statutes, and in the early minutes of the lodges that have been preserved.

The assertion of Anderson, Preston, and other writers of the 18th century, as well as some of a later date, that there was from the earliest period a government of the Craft in England by a Grand Master has been proved to be wholly untenable. Something of the kind appears, however, to have prevailed in Scotland at least from the end of the 16th century.

William Schaw, in his signature subscribed to the Statutes enacted by him, and in various records going back as far as 1583, calls himself, and is called, "the King's Master of Work." This is a very common title in the Middle Ages, but by no means indicated that the possessor of it was a Mason. The *Majester Operis*, or "Master of the Work," sometimes called the *Majister Operum*, or "Master of the Works," was an officer to whom was entrusted the superintendence of the public works. Sometimes, but not necessarily, he was an architect, and hence Anderson always calls these Masters of the Works, Grand Masters, an error which has a very unfortunate effect in confusing true Masonic history. The office was a monastic one also, and in early times the monk who was made the Master of the Work superintended the Masons employed by the monastery in conducting repairs or erecting buildings.

It does not, therefore, follow that Schaw was, from being called by this title, an Operative Mason. The evidence, though circumstantial, is the other way. Indeed, the office of King's Master of the Work was an old one in Scotland, and Schaw himself, in 1583, succeeded Sir Robert Drummond in the office.

But, in 1600, as it appears from a minute of the Lodge of Edinburgh, he presided over a Masonic trial, and to do this he must have been a member of the Craft. He was, therefore, it is to be supposed, a non-professional who was admitted to honorary membership, and he is only one instance among many of the adoption into the brotherhood of persons who were not Masons.

But, in that minute, Schaw is described as "the principal Warden and Chief Master of Masons."

Now, this title of "Principal Warden" is the same as that called in the Statutes of 1599 the "Lord Warden-General." This office of Warden-General, or General Warden, as it is also called, approaches nearer to the idea of a Grand Master than anything that we can find in Anderson's *Constitutions* in respect to the English Masons.

The General Warden appears, according to the Scottish Statutes, to have been possessed of several important prerogatives. He had the power of calling the representatives of the lodges to a General Assembly ; he enacted the statutes for the government of the Craft—the election of Wardens in the particular lodges was to be submitted to him for his approval—and he exercised a general supervision over all the lodges ; in short, the General Warden was, in fact, though not in name, the Grand Master of the Masons in Scotland.

There is some confusion about the names of the officers of the private lodges. In some instances we find the presiding officer called the Deacon, and in others the Warden. But it has been explained that the Warden was recognized as the head of the lodge in its relations with the General Warden, while the Deacon was the chief of the Masons in their incorporate capacity and also the head of the lodge. Sometimes both offices were united in the same person, who was then called “ the Deacon of the Masons and the Warden of the lodge.” As a general rule, however, the Warden appears to have been the presiding officer of the lodge, the custodian of its funds, and the dispenser of its charities. That he held a precedence over the Deacon is evident from the fact that when both are spoken of in a minute or in a regulation, the Warden is named before the Deacon. It is always “ the Warden and Deacon,” and never “ the Deacon and Warden.”

Both officers were elected by the suffrages of the Master Masons of the lodge, and the election was held annually.

In every lodge there were three classes of members : Masters, Fellows, and Apprentices ; but it must be remarked that these were only three ranks, and that they do not by any means indicate that there were three degrees, in the sense in which that word is now understood.

The Masters were those who undertook contracts for building and were responsible to their employers for the fidelity of the work ; the Fellows were the journeymen who were employed by these Master-builders ; and the apprentices were those youths who were engaged, under the Masters, in acquiring a knowledge of their Craft.

If there was a ceremonial of initiation or reception and an esoteric knowledge of certain arcana, that ceremony and that knowledge must have been common to and participated in by each of the

three classes. Whatever was the Mason's secret the Apprentice knew it as well as the Master, for one of Schaw's regulations required that at the admission or reception of a Master or Fellow, there should be present besides six Masters, two Entered Apprentices, whence it is evident that nothing could have been imparted to the newly accepted Master that the Apprentice was not already in possession of.

That the ceremony of initiation was in the 17th century a very simple one is very evident from the slight references to it in the minutes of the lodges. The Statutes of 1598 required it to be performed in the presence alike of Masters and Apprentices, which shows, as has already been said, that it was a ceremony common to both. It appears to have consisted principally of the impartation of what was called the "Mason Word," and a few secrets connected with it, which are called in one of the old minute books, "the secrets of the Mason Word." What these "secrets" were, it is now impossible to discover, but as it has been seen that the Scottish Craft customs were originally derived from the English and the Continental Freemasons it is most probable that the secrets of the Word and the ceremonies of initiation were much the same as those described in the Sloane MS., heretofore quoted as practiced by the English Masons, and those described by Findel as used by the German Masons in the 12th century.

The Squaremen were companies of Wrights and Slaters in Scotland who were very intimately connected with the Masons, and who appear to have had, in many respects, a similarity, if not an identity, of customs.

Now these Squaremen had a ceremony of initiation, a word which was called the "Squaremen's word" and secret methods of recognition. In the ceremony of initiation, which was called the "brithering,"<sup>1</sup> the candidate was blindfolded and prepared in other ways; an oath of secrecy was administered, and after the performances, which were in a guarded chamber, were finished, a banquet was given, the expenses of which were paid by the fee of initiation.

The banquet was in fact so important a part of the ceremony of initiation among the Masons that special provision for it was made by Schaw, the Warden General, in the Statutes of 1598. Appren-

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<sup>1</sup> Jamieson defines the word to brither thus: "To unite into a society or Corporation, sometimes by a very ludicrous process."—"Dictionary of the Scottish Language" in voc.

tices were to pay on their admission six pounds to the "common banquet," and Fellow Crafts ten pounds.

The Fellow Craft was also required to provide the lodge with ten shillings' worth of gloves. Nothing more conclusively proves the connection of the Scottish with the Continental Masons than this reference in the Statutes of the former to the article of gloves to be provided for the lodge. The use of gloves as a portion of the dress of an Operative Mason, is shown in early records to have been very common from early times on the Continent. M. Didron gives, in the *Annales Archéologiques*, several examples from old documents of the presentation to Masons and Stonecutters of gloves. Thus in 1381 the Chatelan of Vallaines bought a considerable quantity of gloves to be given to the workmen, and the reason assigned for the gift is that they might "Shield their hands from the stone and lime." In 1383 three dozen gloves were distributed to the Masons when they began the buildings at the Chartreuse of Dijon. At Amiens twenty-two pairs of gloves were given to the Masons.

The use of gloves seems to have been, among the different crafts, peculiar to the Masons, and their use is well explained as being intended for protection against the corrosive nature of the mortar which they were compelled to handle.

When Operative was superseded by Speculative Masonry the use of this article of dress was not abandoned, and in the Continental lodges to this day, the candidate is required to present two pair of gloves to the lodge on the night of his initiation. But the explanation now made of their use is, of course, altogether symbolical.

Another important ceremony connected with advancement to a higher rank in the fraternity was the production of the *Essay* or Trial piece.

It was a very common custom among the early continental guilds to require of every apprentice to any ~~trade~~ before he could be admitted to his freedom and the prerogatives of a journeyman, that he should present to the guild into which he sought membership, a piece of finished work as a specimen and a proof of his skill in the art in which he had been instructed.

This custom was adopted among the Scottish Masons, and when an apprentice had served his time of probation and was desirous of being advanced to the rank of a fellow or journeyman, he was re-

quired by the statutes to present an *Essay* or piece of work to prove his skill and competent knowledge of the trade.

At first the privilege of inspecting and judging the character of this trial piece was intrusted to the lodge, but afterward it seems to have been taken from them and given to the Incorporations, who, however, resigned it early in the 17th century. When an Apprentice wished to become a Fellow, he applied to his lodge, which, in Edinburgh, referred him to the Incorporation of Masons and Wrights of St. Mary's Chapel. By that body the piece of work to be done was prescribed; *Essay* masters were appointed to attend the candidate and see that he did the work himself, and when it was done, it was submitted to the brethren, who by an open vote admitted or rejected the piece of work.

Lyon very correctly finds a parallel to these *Essay* pieces of the Scottish Operative Masons, in the examinations for advancement from a lower to a higher degree, in the Speculative Lodges, but he is wrong in supposing that these tests for advancement were, in the "inflated language of the Masonic diplomas of the last century characterized as the 'wonderful trials' which the neophyte had had the 'fortitude to sustain' before attaining to the sublime degree of Master Mason."

The "wonderful trials" thus referred to were not the examinations to which the neophyte had been subjected to test his proficiency in the preceding degrees, but were the actual ceremonies of initiation through which he had passed, and considering their severity in the continental lodges, it is hardly an "inflation of language," to speak of some fortitude being needed to sustain them.

Annually both the Masters and the Fellows were required to renew their oath of fidelity and obedience to the brotherhood, and especially to take the obligation that they would not work with cowans.

It was also provided by the statutes that yearly the Fellows and Apprentices should submit to an examination which should test their memory and knowledge of the principles of the art.

Now as it would not have been fair to expect an Apprentice or Fellow to remember what he had never been taught, this regulation led to the introduction of a particular class of persons in the lodges who were called "intendars" or instructors, whose duty it was to instruct the newly admitted persons in the principles of the art.

This custom, according to Lyon, still prevails in some of the Scottish lodges. In the United States, it is a very general usage at the present day to provide an Apprentice as soon as he has been initiated and a Fellow Craft when he has passed, with an instructor whose duty it is to drill him accurately in the lecture of the degree into which he has just been admitted, so that when he applies for advancement he may be enabled to answer the questions that will be asked, and thus prove that he has made "due proficiency."

The transition of Operative into Speculative Masonry which took place soon after the beginning of the 18th century, is the most important portion of the history of the Institution. The gradual approaches to that condition in which the Operative element was wholly superseded by the Speculative, must therefore be regarded with great interest.

These approaches are marked by the introduction of persons who were not professional Masons into the Operative lodges. Occasion has been had heretofore to speak of the reception by a lodge of Operative Masons at Warrington in England, of two gentlemen who certainly were not Operative Masons, namely, Colonel Mainwaring and Elias Ashmole. This event occurred in the year 1646, and it is the earliest record in England of the acceptance of a non-professional member by a lodge of Operative Masons.

It does not, however, follow because this reception is the first recorded that it was therefore the first that took place. On the contrary it is most probable that the custom of receiving non-operative members was a very old one. It had, as we have seen, been practiced by the Roman Colleges of Artificers, and was by them propagated into the early Craft and Trade Guilds, and eventually imitated by the more modern Operative lodges. The practice still prevails in the London Livery Companies, which we know are the successors of the Trade Guilds of the Middle Ages.

In Scotland the custom of admitting non-operatives into the lodges has a much older record than that of England just referred to.

A minute of the Lodge of Edinburgh of the date of June 8th, in the year 1600, a *fac-simile* of which is given by Lyon, records the presence at the meeting of the lodge of William Boswell, Laird of Auchinlech. The meeting was called for the purpose of considering a penalty that had been imposed upon the Warden. The Laird

*PHOTOGRAVURE REPRODUCTION OF ONLY ILLUSTRATION IN  
ORIGINAL "BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS," LONDON, 1723*

*Supposed to be the oldest illustration in Speculative Freemasonry*









of Auchinlech took a part in the deliberations, acquiesced in the decision at which the lodge arrived, and signed his name and affixed his mark to the minutes just as the Operative Masons did.

There are abundance of other instances of the admission of noblemen and gentlemen as honorary members. The case already cited of Boswell proves conclusively that the practice existed before the close of the 16th century. If we had the records we might, I think, find many cases still earlier.

In the admission of these "gentlemen masons," as they were sometimes called, the ceremonies of initiation, whatever they were, appear to have been the same as those practiced in the reception of operative members. As in the present day, and in Speculative Masonry, rank or condition secures no exemption.

Several instances are recorded during the 17th century of brethren who were not operative Masons being elected to preside over lodges. Thus Elphingston, who was tutor of Airth and collector of the King's Customs, was in 1670 one of the Masters or Past Masters of the Lodge of Aberdeen. The Earl of Cassilis was, in 1672, chosen as Deacon or head of the Lodge of Kilwinning. He had been preceded in the same office by Sir Alexander Cunningham, in 1671, and by the Earl of Eglinton in 1670. In 1678 Lord William Cochrane, the son of the Earl of Dundonald, was elected Warden of the same lodge.

All these appointments were merely honorary, and intended, it is to be presumed, to secure the patronage and influence of the noblemen or men of wealth and rank who were thus honored. They were not expected to perform any of the laborious duties of the office, for which task it is most probable that they were unfit. This, as Bro. Lyon observes, "may be inferred from the fact that when a nobleman or a laird was chosen to fill any of the offices named, deputies were elected from the operative members of the Kilwinning Lodge."<sup>1</sup>

The relation of females to Freemasonry in Scotland during the 17th century is worthy of attention.

It has already been seen that in one of the English Constitutions, when referring to the Charges, it is written that "one of the Elders taking the Booke and that he or shee that is to be made

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 52.

a Mason shall lay their hands thereon and the charge shall be given."

From this passage some persons have drawn the apparently natural inference that females were admitted. Bro. Hughan, in commenting on it, thinks that the manuscript being a copy from a much older one, the word "shee" was carelessly retained, and that it is only an evidence that females were admitted in the early Guilds, an historical fact that can not be denied. But he is not prepared to advocate the opinion that women were admitted into the Mysteries of Masonry. And he admits that the custom of the Guilds to admit women was gradually discontinued.

As the passage quoted is found only in the York MS. of 1693, it is more reasonable to suppose that the word "shee" was a clerical error for "they." Hence we have no satisfactory evidence that women were connected with the Masonic lodges in England.

But Bro. Lyon contends that the obligation of the apprentice to protect the interests of his "dame," which is mentioned in the same manuscript, would indicate that it was lawful at that time in England for females, as employers, to execute the work of Masons.

This statement derives probability from the fact that at that time, in Scotland, the widows and daughters of freemen Masons were, under certain restrictions, permitted to exercise the privilege of burghesses in executing Mason's work.

Lyon cites a minute of the Ayr Squaremen Incorporation of the date of 1628, which enacts that every freeman's daughter shall pay for her freedom the sum of eight pounds. But it is clear that if a fine was imposed for the freedom, there must have been a privilege accompanying it, which could have been nothing other than the right to do a freeman's work.

The Lodge of Edinburgh, in 1683, recognized this privilege and qualified it by certain restrictions. It was then enacted that a widow should not undertake work or employ journeymen herself, but might have the benefit of the work under the favor of some freeman "by whose advice and concurrence the work shall be undertaken and the journeymen agreed with."

It is apparent from these two minutes that, from 1628 to 1683 women, the widows or daughters of masons, were in the habit of employing journeymen to do work given to them by the patrons of their husbands or fathers.

But this custom, growing into an evil, in time the females acting independently and assuming the position and exercising the prerogatives of Master Masons, the Lodge of Edinburgh found it necessary at length to correct the abuse and to restrict the privilege by compelling the females to undertake the work and employ the journeymen under the direction of a Master Mason, who, acting for the widow, discharged the duties without receiving compensation (which was strictly prohibited) and gave her the profits.

Another usage of the Scottish Masons in the 17th century was that of opening the lodge with prayer. There is no record of the existence of such a usage in England, although it is highly probable that the same practice prevailed in both countries, since Freemasonry being a later institution in Scotland, we have seen that it derived many of its customs from the sister kingdom.

The use of prayer as an introductory ceremony has always been practiced in the English speculative lodges, and combining this with the fact now known that it was observed by the Scottish operatives, we have an additional reason for believing that it was a usage among the English operative masons of the 17th and earlier centuries.

Bro. Lyon says that in opening with prayer, the Lodge of Edinburgh "followed an example which had been set in the ancient Constitutions of the English Masons which open and close with prayer." Here our generally accurate historian appears to have fallen into an error in confounding the form of composition adopted in writing a manuscript with that of opening a lodge, two things evidently very distinct.

It is of course admitted that all of the old English Constitutions commence with a religious invocation, and that they end either with a prayer for help or an imprecatory formula like the condition of an oath to keep the statutes.

But in a careful examination of all these Constitutions from the Halliwell MS. to the Papworth MS., that is from the first to the last, I have failed to find any regulation or article which prescribes that the business of a lodge shall be preceded by prayer. The only regulation that has a religious bearing is the one that prescribes a reverence for God and Holy Church and the avoidance of heresy or error.

That it was the practice of the early English operative lodges

to open and close with prayer, is an opinion founded wholly on conjecture, but for the reasons already assigned, the conjecture appears to be a plausible one.

But the use of prayer in the Scottish lodges of the 17th century is not conjectural, but is proved by actual records, and Bro. Lyon, in his invaluable work, to which I have been almost wholly indebted for the facts in the present and the preceding chapter, supplies us with two forms of prayers, one "to be said at the convening," and the other "to be said before dismissing." Both are extracted from the minute-books of Mary's Chapel Incorporation for the year 1699, and it will be interesting to compare them with the oldest English formula, namely, that given by Preston.

The first of these, or the prayer at the opening of the lodge, is in the following words :

"O Lord, we most humbly beseech thee to be present with us in mercy, and to bless our meeting and haill (whole) exercise which wee now have in hand. O Lord, enlighten our understandings and direct our hearts and myndes, so with thy good Spirit, that wee may frame all our purposes and conclusions to the glory of thy name and the welfare of our Brethren ; and therefore O Lord, let no partiall respect, neither of ffeed (enmity) nor favour, draw us out of the right way. But grant that we may ever so frame all our purposes and conclusions to the glory of thy name and the welfare of our Brethren. Grant these things, O Lord, unto us, and what else thou sees more necessarie for us, and that only for the love of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, our alone Lord and Saviour ; To whom, with thee, O Father, and the blessed Spirit of Grace, wee render all praise, honor and glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

The second prayer, or that used at the dismission or closing of the lodge, is as follows :

"O Lord, wee most humbly acknowledge thy goodnesse in meeting with us together at this tyme, to confer upon a present condition of this world. O Lord, make us also study heaven and heavenly myndednesse, that we may get our souls for a prey. And O Lord, be with us and accompany us the rest of this day, now and forever, Amen."

The importance of this record of prayers at opening and closing in the Scottish lodges, is that it adds great force to the conjecture that a similar custom prevailed in the English lodges at the same

period. The statement made by the biographer of Wrenn and quoted by Findel, that the mediæval Masons of England commenced their labor each day at sunrise by a prayer, the Master taking his station in the East and the Brethren forming in a half circle around him, is a mere tradition. There is the want of a contemporary record. But the fact that there is such a record, absolutely authentic in the minutes of a Scottish lodge of the period, throws necessarily an air of great probability upon the tradition.

That the record of the Scottish lodge is a minute made in the last year but one of the 17th century does not necessarily lead to the inference that the custom had just then begun. The record is more likely, when there is no evidence to the contrary, to have been that of a custom long previously in existence than of one that has just then been adopted.

So we may fairly conclude that it was the usage of the Scottish lodges of the 17th century to open and close their meetings with prayer, a usage that we have reason to infer was also practiced by the English lodges of the same period.

The last of the Scottish Masonic customs to which it is necessary to refer is that of the use of Marks, instead of, or sometimes as supplemented to, the written signature.

This is an interesting subject and claims a very careful and thorough consideration.

The presence of certain figures chiselled on the stones of a building has been remarked by travelers as occurring in almost all countries where architecture had made any progress and at very early epochs. It has been remarked by Mr. Ainsworth, an oriental traveler, that he found among some ruins in Mesopotamia that "every stone, not only in the chief building but in the walls and bastions and other public monuments, when not defaced by time, is marked with a character which is for the most part either a Chaldean letter or numeral."

On the floor of a tomb at Agra, in India, it was found that every stone was inscribed with a peculiar mark chiseled upon it by the workman. Copies of over sixty of these marks were given in 1865 by a writer in the London *Freemasons' Quarterly Review*.

In an interesting work on Architecture by Mr. George God-



win,<sup>1</sup> the author, referring to the Freemasons of the Middle Ages, makes the following remarks :

“Several years ago my attention was led to the fact that many of our ancient buildings exhibited on the face of the walls, both inside and outside, marks of a peculiar character on the face of the stones which were evidently the work of the original builders ; and it occurred to me that if examined and compared they might serve to throw light upon these bands of operatives. I made a large collection of them in England, France, Belgium and Germany, some of which were published in the *Archæologia*. These are simply the marks made by the Masons to identify their work ; but it is curious to find them exactly the same in different countries and descending from early times to the present day ; for in parts of Germany and Scotland tables of marks are still preserved in the lodges, and one is given to the (practical) mason on taking up his freedom. He cuts it, however, on the bed of the stone now instead of on its face. The marks are usually two or three inches long.”

These marks were, it is evident, prescribed by the Masters or Superintendents of the buildings in process of construction to be used by the workmen, so that each one's work might be identified when censure or approval was to be awarded. It was a measure of precaution, and the employment of marks is no evidence, unless the mark itself is of a purely Masonic character, that the workmen who used them were Freemasons.

At first, it seems from the observations of Mr. Ainsworth, they were merely letters or numbers. Afterward those found at Agra were principally astronomical or mathematical. But when used by organized bands of Freemasons we find among these marks such symbols as the hour-glass, the pentalpha, and the square and compasses. When the Freemasons followed the precautionary system of the ordinary stonecutters and adopted the use of marks, they gave, most generally, a symbolic character to them, though sometimes they made use of monograms of their names.

M. Didron, who discovered these marks at Spire, Worms, Strasburg, Rheims, Basle, and several other places, and who made a report of his investigations to the Historical Committee of Arts and

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<sup>1</sup> “History in Ruins ; a Handbook of Architecture for the Unlearned.” By George Godwin, F.R.S., London, 1858.

Sciences of Paris, believed that he could discover in them reference to distinct schools or lodges of Masons. He divides them into two classes, those of the overseers and those of the men who worked the stones. The marks of the first class consist of monogrammatic characters, while those of the second are of the nature of symbols, such as shoes, trowels, and mallets.

It is possible that something like this distinction is to be found in the old Scottish marks. Of the 91 marks, copies of which are given in *fac-simile* by Bro. Lyon as taken from the minute-book of the Lodge of Edinburgh, 16 are evidently monograms, such as GI, ME, AL, VH, NI, etc., while the remaining 75 are symbols, principally the cross in various forms, the triangle, the hour-glass, represented by two triangles joined at their apices, the pentalpha, etc. In one instance the monogram and the symbol are combined, where David Salmon adopts as his mark a fish or salmon, with the head in the form of the Delta or Greek letter equivalent to D.

There was undoubtedly a distinction of monogrammatic and symbolic marks, but whether Didron's idea that they belonged to two different classes of workmen is correct or not, it is impossible positively to ascertain. Bro. Lyon, however, affirms that "in regard to the arrangement of Marks into distinctive classes, one for Apprentices, one for Fellow Crafts, and a third for Foremen—the practice of the Lodge of Edinburgh, or that of Kilwinning, as far as can be learned from their records, was never in harmony with the teachings of tradition on that point."

It has been supposed the degree now called the "Mark Master's Degree" was originally manufactured by some ritual mongers toward the close of the last century and attached as a supernumerary degree to the Ancient and Accepted or Scottish Rite. I have in my possession the original charter granted in 1802 by the Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem, of Charleston, S. C., to American Eagle Mark Lodge No. 1.<sup>1</sup> When Thomas Smith Webb was establishing his new system he incorporated the Mark degree in his ritual and made it the fourth degree of the American Rite, as it is practiced in the United States of America. It has been supposed that Webb derived his degree from the Ancient and Accepted Rite,

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<sup>1</sup> It was published in 1851 by the author in the "Southern and Western Masonic Miscellany," vol. ii., p. 300.

and it is not improbable that he did so. But more recently it has been discovered that the degree of Mark Mason and that of Mark Master Mason was given in Scotland by some of the Craft lodges as early as 1778. An excerpt made by that indefatigable Archæologist, Bro. W. J. Hughan, from the minutes of the Lodge Operative Banff under date of January 7, 1778, shows that the degree of Mark Mason was conferred on Fellow Crafts, and that of Mark Master Mason on Master Masons.

I think, therefore, that we may fairly attribute the origin of the degree to the Masons of Scotland. The ritual has of course grown, as all rituals do, by gradual accretions to its present extent. But it is hardly necessary to say that the allegory and the tradition of the origin of the degree at the Temple of King Solomon is a mere symbolic myth, which is wholly unsupported by historical authority.

The statutes enacted by William Schaw, in 1598, for the government of the Masons of Scotland, direct that on the reception and admission of every Fellow Craft his name and mark shall be inserted in the book or register of the lodge.

The subsequent lodge minutes show that giving or taking a mark was accompanied by a fee, which was paid by the Fellow for this privilege.

The minutes also show that Apprentices were also permitted to select and use a mark.

The position and the prerogatives of Apprentices in the Scottish lodges is worthy of notice, especially as throwing some light on their condition in the English lodges, of which so little is said in the old Constitutions.

The presence of Apprentices at the admission of Fellow Crafts, was provided for in the Statutes of Schaw, as has already been seen.

Another prerogative granted to the Apprentices was that of giving or withholding their assent to any proposed accession of their ranks in the lodge.

They thus appear to have been so far recognized as active members. But Lyon says that this concession does not appear to have been granted to all Apprentices, but only to such as being "bound for the freedom" afterward became "Mason burgesses" and members of the Incorporation—Apprentices whose aim was that of becoming qualified for employment as journeymen.

If this view of Lyon is correct it would show an aristocratic distinction of rank, which was certainly unknown to the English Masons.

Apprentices were sometimes permitted to undertake work, of no very great value, on their own account, but with the consent of their Masters; a privilege that does not appear to have been conceded by the English Statutes.

The "passing" of an Apprentice to the rank of a Fellow Craft, although not a ceremony which added anything to the store of his Masonic knowledge, was still necessary to the extension of the influence and the increase of the revenues of the lodge. Apparently toward the end of the 17th century, many Apprentices were disinclined, at the expiration of their time of service, to undergo the trouble and expense of passing, but were disposed to work as unpassed journeymen. So at the beginning of the 18th century it was made imperative on Apprentices soon after their time of apprenticeship was out to "make themselves Fellow Crafts."

Fellow Crafts, or journeymen, were permitted to have Apprentices of their own, and it was provided by law that a Master might employ such fellows and yet not also employ their Apprentices, or he might employ the Apprentice and not the Fellow to whom he was bound. This seems to have been a peculiarity of Scottish Masonry in the 17th century. No similar provision is found in the English Constitutions.

Apprentices were prohibited from marrying, a very necessary provision, considering their relation to their Master's houses, which it may well be supposed existed in every other country.

In all of these usages of the Scottish Masons in the 17th century, we see the characteristics of an operative system. But this system was admitting the gradual encroachment of the Speculative element exhibited in the admission into the operative lodges of non-professional members.

The progress of this transition from an Operative to a Speculative character is better marked or rather better recorded in the Scottish than in the English history of Freemasonry.

In the latter we are aroused with suddenness from the contemplation of the operative system as detailed in the manuscript Constitutions extending into the very beginning of the 18th century, to the unexpected organization, without previous notice, of a purely

Speculative Grand Lodge a very few years after the date of the last written Constitution, which makes no reference to such an institution.

But the Grand Lodge of Scotland was not organized until nineteen years after that of the sister kingdom. The approaches to the change were gradual and well marked, and the struggle which terminated in the victory of Speculative or modern Freemasonry has been carefully recorded.

But the narrative of the events which led to the establishment in the year 1736 of the Grand Lodge of Scotland will form the interesting materials for a distinct chapter.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FRENCH GUILDS OF THE MIDDLE AGES



AN account has already been given in this work of the character of the English Craft guilds or corporations of workmen. I have not been able to concur in the views of Mr. Thorpe, nor in the qualified opinion of Brentano, that we are to look for the origin of these guilds, not in the Roman Colleges, but in the Scandinavian confraternities.

In Gaul, and subsequently, with greater development, in France, we find the existence of similar guilds or corporations of workmen, and here we are able to trace them more directly to the Roman Colleges of Artificers, as their models, because, after the fall of the Empire and the invasion of the barbarians, the old inhabitants were not exterminated by the invaders. On the contrary, the Franks were well disposed to the Roman culture and civilization, accepted many of the Roman laws and customs, imitated the remaining monuments of Roman taste and skill, and finally adopted, in the place of their own rough Teutonic dialect, a modified form of the Latin language.

The Craft guilds or corporations of workmen which were in existence in Gaul at an early period after the decay of the Roman Empire, continued to exist with spasmodic interruptions until the 12th and 13th centuries, when they were fully developed in the *Corporations des Métiers*.

The writers of the exhaustive article on this subject in Lacroix's massive work on the *Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, have advanced the theory that the guilds came into Gaul with the conquerors, and were therefore of Scandinavian or Teutonic origin, but in their subsequent investigations they appear tacitly to admit the fact that there was a very close connection between them and the Roman Colleges.

M. Aug. Thierry is of the opinion that the corporations, like the municipal communes, found their origin in the principles that governed the Roman Colleges. The guild, he says, was the moving power; the Roman Colleges the material on which it acted and out of which it was generated, and he thinks it would be interesting to examine how this motive principle as a new element has been applied to the ancient element of municipal organization which we historically know to have been of Roman origin and in what proportion it is combined with them.

In other words, he would seek to trace the connection between the Guilds and the Roman Colleges and to determine the influence of one upon the other.

Now this is the very investigation in which I propose to be engaged in the present chapter, as I have already pursued in the previous discussion of the early English guilds.

The theory that I have hitherto maintained, and which I have seen no reasonable cause to repudiate, is that the Guilds were the successors, as it were, by inheritance of the Roman Colleges.

Therefore, though the subject of these institutions has already been very fully treated, it will be expedient to introduce the history of the early guilds of Gaul and of their progress until they culminate in the 12th century in the *Corporations des Métiers*, by a brief recapitulation of what has been before said at length on the subject of the Colleges of Artificers of ancient Rome.

The corporations of artisans, which received the name of *Collegia Artificum* or Colleges of Artificers, are supposed to have been instituted by Numa, who first divided the artisans of Rome into nine colleges, gave them regulations for their government, and prescribed peculiar rites and customs to be observed by them. They met in their course from the Kingdom to the Empire with many vicissitudes. They were abolished by Tullus Hostilius, re-established by Servius, again interdicted and anew instituted and enlarged in their faculties by the decemvirs. Under the republic they were a constant source of inquietude and danger; their turbulent members, misled by demagogues, repeatedly threatened the security of the state. They were, during the latter years of the republic, often dissolved and as often re-established. Finally, Caligula definitively re-constituted them and invested them with all their ancient prerogatives. Trajan and his successors showed the colleges but little favor; they were, how-

ever, tolerated because the artisans, deprived of consideration in the city, were much better received in the provinces, and could be retained at the Capital only by securing to them their privileges. At this epoch they had become very numerous both at Rome and in its provinces. A contemporary of Alexander Severus names thirty-two colleges; Constantine designates thirty more, and the inscriptions preserved by Heineccius, their most reliable historian, enumerates many more.

The colleges required for their legal existence the authority of the law—in modern phrase it was necessary for them to be incorporated. Those which were not were styled *illicit* and their existence was prohibited.

Into each college, the artisans of only a particular profession or handicraft were admitted; slaves even might become members with the consent of their masters; and at length, persons of distinction who were not of the profession practiced by the college were received as patrons or honorary members, and these became the protectors of the college.

Some of the trades, as for instance that of the bakers, were hereditary, and the practice of the trade descended from father to son.

No artist or craftsman was permitted to belong to more than one college.

Each college had the right to enact its own regulations for its internal government; for this purpose, and for the discussion of their common interests, the members frequently assembled, they elected their officers, and imposed a tax for the support of the common chest and decided these and all other questions by a majority of suffrages.

Each college had its patron deity and exercised peculiar religious rites of sacrifice and commemorative feasts, which sometimes degenerated into Bacchanalian banquets.

Such is a brief outline of the Craft guilds, as they may justly be styled, which prevailed in Rome at the time of the dissolution of the Empire, and which, for the reason already assigned, flourished with great popularity in all the provinces from southern Gaul to the northern limits of England, the evidence of which is extant in the numerous inscriptions which have been preserved commemorative of their residence and their labors in every part of Europe.

The writers of the article on the Corporations of Craftsmen, in



the work of Lacroix, assert that under the conquering Germans, from the moment that Europe emerged from the government of Rome, without ever completely escaping from the influence of its laws, the confraternities of workmen never for an instant ceased to exist. The rare vestiges that we possess of them do not permit us to believe in their prosperous condition, but they attest at least their persistence.<sup>1</sup>

These fraternities of workmen were the Provincial colleges which the invaders found when they entered the countries whence they had expelled the former Roman masters. But the Teutonic tribes, whose invasion was for the purpose of a permanent settlement, and not like that of the Huns, merely for temporary occupation and devastation, were not, as has been well observed, alien in mind and spirit from the Romans whom they had conquered. They had, to some extent, become familiar with the civilization which in the trial of strength they had overcome. Some of them had been soldiers in the imperial service or at the court, and many of them had listened to the teachings of Christian missionaries, and, though in an imperfect way, adopted Christianity as their religion.<sup>2</sup>

When, therefore, says Mr. Church, they founded their new kingdom in Gaul, in Spain, and in Italy, the things about them were not absolutely new to them. The influences of the Christian religion, which they imperfectly professed, of the Roman laws, which they did not altogether abolish, and of the Latin language, which they began insensibly to adopt, were exerted in producing a tolerance for the Roman corporations of workmen, as well as for many other Roman customs, and a facility for adopting the same system of organizing workmen, which led in time to the establishment of the guilds.

Of the regular progress of these guilds in the earlier centuries, as if they were a mere continuation of the corporations of the Roman colleges, we have sufficient, if not abundant, records.

Lucius Ampelius, a Latin writer of the 5th century, mentions,

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<sup>1</sup> The article in Lacroix's "*Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance*," which treats of the "*Corporations de Métiers*," was written by MM. Monteil and Rabutaux. To their researches I have been indebted for much that is contained in this chapter; but for the sake of brevity and convenience I shall cite authority under the general reference to Lacroix.

<sup>2</sup> Church, "*The Beginning of the Middle Ages*," p. 46.

in his *Liber Memorialis*, a consul or chief of the locksmiths, whence we may infer an organized body of those craftsmen. Under the Merovingian kings, or the first dynasty of France, we meet with a corporation of goldsmiths. The bakers were probably organized under Charlemagne, as he took measures for their regulation, and in 630 they are distinctly spoken of as a corporation in the ordinances of Dagobert.

In Lombardy, which after its conquest by Charlemagne was in close relations with France, there were many colleges or corporations of artisans. We find in Ravenna, in 943, a college of fishermen, and ten years afterward a chief of the corporation of merchants; in 1001 a chief of the corporation of butchers. In 1061 Philip I. granted certain privileges to the Master chandlers.

The "ancient customs" of the butchers are mentioned in the time of Louis VII., in 1162; the same prince, in 1160, granted to the wife and heirs of one Yves Laccohre the faculty of practicing five trades, namely, those of the glovers, the purse-makers, the belt-makers, the cobblers, and the shoemakers.<sup>1</sup>

Under the subsequent reign of Philip II. similar grants or concessions are more numerous.

This monarch, whose military exploits had won for him the title of "Conqueror" and "Augustus," is said to have approved the statutes of several corporations; in 1182 he confirmed those of the butchers, and granted them several privileges; in the next year the skinners and the drapers were also the objects of his favor.<sup>2</sup>

In all Europe, say the writers in Lacroix's work, toward the 12th century, Italy gave the first impulse to that restoration to splendor of the corporations which for some centuries had been diminishing in importance. The confraternities of artisans in the north of France also constituted themselves into corporations, whence they spread into the cities across the Rhine. In Germany the guild had for a long time preserved its primitive form, and therefore the German and the French corporations are not to be confounded, though they had a common origin.

The most important event that marked the reign of Louis VI. in the 12th century was the affranchisement of the inhabitants of

<sup>1</sup> "Et Boileau, *Livre des Métiers*." Introduction by M. Depping.

<sup>2</sup> Lacroix, "*Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance*."

the cities,<sup>1</sup> and the establishment of the *Communes*, or independent municipal governments. One of the results of this movement was the revived organization of the Parisian Hanse. This, which Lacroix calls the oldest and most considerable of the French corporations, was a company of the recently enfranchised citizens of Paris under the name of the *Merchandise de l'eau*. It was a corporation to which was assigned the control of river navigation. A corporation similar in character had existed during the Roman domination, but in the lapse of time and under changes of government had become extinct. To this ancient corporation, however, it is probable that the new one owed its origin. The Parisian Hanse was always treated with great favor by the Kings. Louis VII. confirmed their privileges, and Philip II. increased them. At length it obtained the privilege of the navigation of the Seine and Yonde between Mantes and Auvern. Foreign merchants could not pass these limits and bring goods into Paris unless they had affiliated with the Hanse, and associated in their mercantile gains a citizen who served as their guaranty. It presided over the disembarkation of all goods brought into Paris, and controlled all buying and selling. After a short time similar corporations were established in all the cities bordering on the sea or on rivers.

Previous to the second part of the 13th century several corporations of artists or Craft guilds had been authorized by different monarchs, but it is only in the reign of St. Louis, from 1226 to 1270, that we are to date the first general measures taken for the establishment of the communities in France, and of the corporations on a legal basis. Up to that time the Prevostship of Paris had been a venal office, which was sold to the highest bidder. Louis resolved to reform this abuse, and appointed Stephen Boileau to the office of Prevost of Paris.

Of Etienne, or Stephen Boileau,<sup>2</sup> French writers have not been niggardly in their encomiums. He was undoubtedly a magistrate worthy of the greatest praise. To him Paris is indebted for its police. He moderated and fixed the taxes and imposts which, under previous Prevosts, had been levied arbitrarily on trade and

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<sup>1</sup> It was not until the 14th century that the stain of serfdom was removed from the peasants.

<sup>2</sup> The name has been indifferently spelled, Boileau, Boyleau, Boleaue, or Boylesve. I have adhered to the most usual orthography.

commerce. But his most important act in relation to our present subject was the distribution of the merchants and artisans into distinct communities or corporations under the name of confraternities, with specific statutes for their government.

He collected from old records and other ancient sources the customs and usages of the various crafts, most of which had never been written; collated them, and most probably improved them in many parts, preserved them as monuments in the archives of the Chatelet, which was the Guildhall of Paris, and thus composed his invaluable work entitled *Livre des Métiers*, or the "Book of the Crafts."<sup>1</sup>

In his introduction to this work, M. Depping says that "it has the advantage of being for the most part the work of the corporations themselves; and not a series of regulations drawn up by the authority of the State."

The systems of corporations now began to enter into the regular framework of the social organization. Royal confirmations of charters, which had been rare during the 12th century, were multiplied in the 13th, and became a universal usage in the 14th century.<sup>2</sup>

As an evidence of the growth of these fraternities in cities neighboring to France, it may be noted that in the year 1228 Bologna had twenty-one corporations of crafts; in 1321 Parma had eighteen, and in 1376 Turin had twenty-six.

The *Livre des Métiers* of Boileau contains the statutes or regulations of one hundred different corporations, and these were not all that were then existing in Paris. Some, for various reasons, had neglected or declined to have themselves inscribed at the Chatelet.

In succeeding reigns the corporations were greatly multiplied. Under the administration of the Chancellor Tellier, in the reigns of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., Sauval records in his *Histoire des Antiquités de la Ville de Paris*, that he had counted 1,531 corporations in that city.

Some of these Parisian corporations possessed distinguished privileges. Such were the guild or corporation of Drapers, who held a pre-eminence over all others, the Grocers, the Mercers, the Skinners, the Hosiers, and the Goldsmiths.

<sup>1</sup> This work, long in manuscript, was first printed and published in 1837 in one volume quarto at Paris by M. Depping, who has enriched it with a learned Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Lacroix, "Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance."

Some of the corporations were held directly under the royal authority and some under certain high officers of the court.

In the first centuries after the dissolution of the Roman Empire the Roman law as to illicit or unauthorized corporations seems to have become obsolete or to have been wholly disregarded, and the corporations were constituted and organized at the will of their organizers. But subsequently, and more especially after the 12th century, the approval of their regulations by the King or other person, in whose jurisdiction they were, was required to impart to them a legal condition.

These corporations had their peculiar privileges conceded to them by the royal or other competent authority, and their statutes and regulations enacted, for the most part, by themselves. They were distinguished from each other by their coats of arms, which they displayed in their processions and on other public occasions.

Each of the corporations held its General Assembly, to which the members frequently came from a great distance. Absentees were often fined.

The number of craftsmen who attended was frequently great. For instance, in 1361, the General Assembly of the Drapers of Rouen was composed of more than a thousand persons.<sup>1</sup>

These Assemblies were generally convened by the officers of the King, who assisted at them either in person or by their delegates; but sometimes they were called together by the artisans without royal authority.

To render the attendance on them more convenient, artisans of the same profession usually inhabited the same quarter of the city, and even the same street. Sometimes this common residence was made obligatory, as in the case of the booksellers of Paris, who were compelled to dwell beyond the bridges on the right bank of the Seine.

The writers in Lacroix assert that these communities or corporations were in possession of all the privileges that formerly attached to the Roman Colleges. They could possess property, sustain actions at law through a procurator, and accept legacies. They had a common chest, exacted dues of their members, and exercised

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<sup>1</sup> Lacroix, *ut supra*.

a police jurisdiction over them, and, to some extent, a criminal one. They struggled to preserve and to augment their privileges, and took part in all the conflicts of those turbulent times and in the quarrels, which were by no means few, between the Masters and the workmen. Some of them even exercised a jurisdiction over artisans who were not members of the corporation.

In most of the corporations the officers were elected by the community, though in some cases they were appointed by the King or other extraneous authority.

The members of the corporation were divided into three classes : Apprentices, Companions, and Masters. The writers in Lacroix speak of these classes as degrees, but evidently without attaching to the word the meaning conveyed in the modern Masonic use of it. They were simply ranks, or classes, the lower subordinate to the higher.

The duration of apprenticeship was from two to eight years, and in most of the trades the Companion had to undergo a considerable probation before he could become a Master. The Companion was usually called a *varlet gaignant* ; that is, a man who earns wages equivalent to the English *journeyman*, or, as he was called in the old Masonic charges, a *Fellow*.

When the Apprentice, having completed his apprenticeship, or the Companion was desirous of being promoted to the rank of Master, he assumed the title of Aspirant.<sup>1</sup> He was subjected to frequent rigid examinations, and was required to prove his fitness for advancement by executing some of the principal products of the trade or craft which he professed. This was called his *chef-d'œuvre*, and in its execution he was surrounded by minute formalities. He was closely confined in an edifice or apartment specially prepared for the occasion ; he was deprived of all communication with his relations or friends, and worked under the eyes of officers of the corporation. His task lasted sometimes for several months. It was not always confined to the direct products of the trade, but sometimes extended to the fabrication of the tools used in his craft.

The aspirant having successfully submitted to the examinations and trials imposed upon him, and having renewed his oath of fidelity to the King, an oath which he must have previously taken as an Ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Lacroix, ut supra.

prentice, was required afterward to pay a tax, which was sometimes heavy, and which was divided between the King or Lord and the corporation. This tax was, however, remitted or greatly reduced in the case of the son of a Master of the Craft. From this usage has been, undoubtedly, derived the custom which still prevails in the Speculative Masonry of some countries, and which was once universal, of initiating a *louveteau*, or the son of a Mason, at an earlier age than that prescribed for other candidates.

The statutes of every corporation exercised great vigilance over the private life and morals of the members.

Bastards could not be accepted as Apprentices. To be admitted to the Mastership it was necessary that the Aspirant should enjoy a stainless reputation. To use the modern Masonic phrase, he must be "under the tongue of good report."

If an artisan associated with heretics or excommunicated persons, or eat or drank with them, he was subject to punishment.

The statutes cultivated good feelings and affectionate relations between the members.

The merchant or craftsman could not strive to entice a customer to enter his shop when he was approaching that of his neighbor.

Improper language to each other subjected the offender to a fine.

In reference to religion, each corporation constituted a religious confraternity, which was placed under the patronage of some saint, who was deemed the special protector of the profession. Thus St. Crispin was the patron saint of the Shoemakers, and St. Eloy of the Smiths.

Every corporation possessed a chapel in some church of the quarter, and often maintained a chaplain.

The corporations had religious exercises on stated occasions for the spiritual and temporal prosperity of the community; they rendered funeral honors to the dead, and took care of the widows and orphans of deceased members; they distributed alms and sent to the hospitals the contributions which had been collected at their banquets.

The brethren received a strange workman in their trade when entering a city, welcomed him, provided for his first wants, sought work for him, and if that failed the eldest Companion yielded his place to him.

But this character in time degenerated, the banquets became

debauches, conflicts took place between the workmen, and coalitions were formed against the industrial classes.

The law then interfered, and these confraternities or guilds were forbidden, but without much success.

It will be very evident to the reader that the details here given of the rise and progress, the form and organization of the mediæval corporations or guilds do not refer to the Masons exclusively, but to the circle of the handicrafts of which the Masons constituted only one, but an important, portion. Before the middle of the 12th, or the beginning of the 13th, century, the corporations of Freemasons were not distinguished from the other crafts by any peculiar organization. They had undoubtedly derived a prominence over the other guilds in consequence of their connection with the construction of Cathedrals and other great public buildings; but "at that time," says Mr. Fergusson,<sup>1</sup> "all trades and professions were organized in the same manner, and the guild of Masons differed in no essential particulars from those of the Shoemakers or Hatters, the Tailors or Vintners—all had their Masters and Past Masters, their Wardens and other Officers, and were recruited from a body of Apprentices, who were forced to undergo years of probationary servitude before they were admitted to practice their arts."

Mr. Fergusson draws incorrectly a deduction that the Freemasons were an insignificant body, and hence in his book, he pays no attention to them outside of Germany. He even underrates their constructive capacity, and thinks that the designs of the Cathedrals and other religious edifices were made by Bishops, who, taking as a model some former building, verbally corrected its mistakes and suggested his improvements to his builder. But history has shown that in France, as well as elsewhere, there were at an early period laymen who were distinguished architects.

The only legitimate inference that can be deduced from the fact that all the other handicrafts were organized on the same plan as the Masons, is that the guild spirit universally prevailed, and that there was a common origin for it, which most writers have correctly referred to the Roman Colleges, which were the most ancient guilds with which we are acquainted.

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<sup>1</sup> "History of Architecture in all Countries from the Earliest Times to the Present Day." By James Fergusson, F.R.S., etc., London, 1867, vol. i., p. 477.



Having thus far treated of the guilds in general, or the corporations of all the trades, it is now proper to direct our attention exclusively to the Masonic Guilds as they present themselves to us in France during the Middle Ages.

Larousse, who has compiled the best and most exhaustive encyclopædic dictionary in the French language, makes a distinction between the associations of Masons and those of the Freemasons in France, a distinction which has existed in other countries, but with more especial peculiarities in France. Like all the other crafts, they were divided into three ranks or degrees of Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master. But I fail to find any evidence that there was a separate initiation or an esoteric knowledge peculiar to each rank which would constitute it a degree in the modern and technical sense of that word.

Larousse mixes the history of the French with that of the German Freemasons, but makes the Operative Masonic Guilds spring out of a jealousy or rivalry on the part of the Operative with the better-cultured architects.

He says that while the nomadic constructors of cathedrals and castles, that is to say, the Traveling Freemasons, who, springing out of Lombardy, were organized at Strasburg, at Cologne, and probably at York, formed a kind of aristocracy of the Craft, other Masons, attached to the soil and living, therefore, always in one place, formed independent and distinct corporations in the 15th century. I think, however, that such organizations may be found at an earlier period.

These Masons did not, like the German and English Freemasons, claim to be the disciples of St. John the Baptist, but placed themselves under the patronage of St. Blaise.

St. Blaise was a bishop and martyr who suffered in the 3d century, during the persecution of Diocletian. His legend says that he was tortured by having his flesh torn with iron combs, such as are used in carding wool. Hence he has been adopted by the wool-staplers as their patron. But it is inexplicable why he should have been selected by the Masons of France as their protecting saint, since there is nothing in the legend of his life that connects him with architecture or building.

The Guild or Corporation of Masons comprised Masons proper; that is, Builders, Stonecutters, Plaisterers, and Mortar Mixers. This

we learn from the Regulations for the Arts and Trades of Paris, drawn up by Stephen Boileau and contained in the 48th chapter of his *Livre des Métiers*.

It will be interesting to compare these regulations of the French Masons, drawn up or copied as is said by Boileau from the older ones enacted by St. Eloy, with the statutes or constitutions of the English Masons contained in their Old Records. I have therefore inserted below a literal translation of them from the *Livre des Métiers*.

REGULATIONS OF THE MASONS, STONECUTTERS, PLAISTERERS, AND  
MORTAR MIXERS.

1. Whosoever desires may be a Master at Paris provided that he knows the trade and works according to the usages and customs of the craft.

2. No one can have more than one Apprentice and he can not take him for less than six years of service, but he may take him for a longer period and for money (a fee) if he has it. And if he takes him for a less period than six years he is subject to a fine of twenty sous of Paris, to be paid to the Chapel of St. Blaise, except only that he should be his son born in lawful wedlock.

3. A Mason may take another Apprentice, as soon as the other has accomplished five years of his service, for the same period that the other had been taken.

4. The present King on whom may God bestow a happy life has given the Mastership of the Masons to Master William de Saint Pater, during his pleasure. The said Master William swore at Paris in the lodges of the Pales before said, that he would to the best of his power, well and loyally protect the Craft, the poor as well as the rich, the weak as well as the strong as long as it was the king's pleasure that he should protect the Craft aforesaid and then Master William took the form of oath before said, before the Prevost of Paris in the Châtelet (or town hall).

5. The Mortar Masters and the Plaisterers have the same condition and standing, in all things as the Masons.

6. The Master who presides over the Craft of Masons, of Mortar Mixers and of Plaisterers, of Paris, by the King's order may have two Apprentices, but only on the conditions before said, and if he

should have more, he will be assessed in the manner above provided for.

7. The Masons, the Mortar Mixers and the Plaisterers may have as many assistants and servants as they please so long as they do not in any point teach them the mystery of the trade.

8. Every Mason, every Mortar Mixer and every Plaisterer must swear on the gospels that he will maintain and do well and loyally to the Craft, each in his place and that if he knows that any one is doing wrong and not acting according to the usages and Craft aforesaid he will every time make it known, under his oath, to the Master.

9. The Master whose Apprentice has completed his time of service, must go before the Master of the Craft and declare that his Apprentice has finished his time well and faithfully ; and the Master who presides over the Craft must make the Apprentice swear on the gospels that he will conform well and truly to the usages and customs of the Craft.

10. No one should work at the aforesaid trade on days when flesh may be eaten after nones have been sounded at Notre Dame (*i.e.*, 3 o'clock in the afternoon) and on Saturday in Lent after Vespers have been chanted at Notre Dame unless it be on an arch, or to close a stair way or door opening on the street. And if any one should work after the aforesaid hours except in the above mentioned works of necessity he shall pay a fine of four deniers to the Master who presides over the Craft and the Master may take his tools for the fine.

11. The Mortar Mixers and the Plaisterers are under the jurisdiction of the Master aforesaid appointed by the king to preside over the Craft.

12. If a Plaisterer should send any man plaister to be used in a work, the Mason who is working for him to whom the plaister is sent, should by his oath, take care that the measure of the plaister is good and lawful ; and if he suspects the measure he should measure the plaister or cause it to be measured in his presence. And if he finds that the measure is not good, the plaisterer must pay a fine of 5 sous ; that is to say, 2 sous to the Chapel of St. Blaise, 2 sous to the Master who presides over the Craft and 11 (12?) deniers to him who has measured the plaister. And he to whom the plaister was delivered shall rebate from each sack that he

shall receive in that work, as much as should have been in that which was measured in the beginning. But where there is only one sack, it shall not be measured.

13. No one can become a Plaisterer at Paris unless he pays 5 *sous* to the Master who, by the King's order presides over the Craft; and when he has paid the 5 *sous* he must swear on the gospels that he will mix nothing but plaister with his plaister, and that he will deliver good and true measure.

14. If the Plaisterer puts anything which he ought not, in his plaister he shall be fined 5 *sous*, to be paid to the Master every time that he is detected. And if the Plaisterer makes it a practice to do this, and will not submit to fine or punishment, the Master may exclude him from the Craft, and if he will not leave the Craft at the Master's order, the Master must make it known to the Prevost of Paris, and the Prevost must compel the Plaisterer to quit the Craft aforesaid.

15. The Mortar Mixer must swear before the Master and before other syndics of the Craft, that he will make Mortar only out of good limestone, and if he makes it of any other kind of stone or if the mortar is made of limestone but of inferior quality he should be reprimanded and should pay a fine of 4 *deniers* to the Master of the Craft.

16. A Mortar Mixer can not take an Apprentice for a less time of service than six years and a fee of 100 *sous* for teaching.

17. The Master of the Craft has petty jurisdiction and the infliction of fines over the Masons, Plaisterers, and Mortar Mixers, their assistants and apprentices, as it will be the King's pleasure, as well as over those who intrude into their trades and over the infliction of corporal punishment without drawing blood and over the right of clamor or immediate arrest and trial if it did not affect property.

18. If any one of the Craft departs before the Master of the Craft, if he is in contempt he must pay a fine of 4 *deniers* to the Master; and if he returns and asks admission he should give a pledge; and if he does not pay before night, there is a fine of 4 *deniers* to the Master; and if he refuses and acts wrongly, there is a fine of 4 *deniers* to the Master.

19. The Master who presides over the Craft, can inflict only a fine for a quarrel; and if he who has been fined is so hot and foolish

that he will not obey the commands of the Master nor pay the fine, the Master may exclude him from the Craft.

20. If any one who has been excluded from the Craft by the Master, works at the trade after his exclusion, the Master may take away his tools and retain them until he pays a fine ; and if he offers resistance, the Master must make it known to the Prevost of Paris who must overcome the resistance.

21. The Masons and the Plaisterers are liable to do watch, to pay taxes, and are subject to all the duties which the other citizens of Paris owe to the King.

22. The Mortar Mixers are exempt from watching, and also the stonecutters as the syndics have heard said from father to son from the time of Charles Martel.

23. The Master, who by the King's order presides over the Craft, is exempt from watching in consequence of that he does in presiding over the Craft.

24. He who is over sixty years old, or whose wife is dead, ought not to serve on the watch ; but he ought to make it known to the King's Keeper of the Watch.

From these Regulations we learn that there was an officer who presided over the Craft in general, and who in many respects resembled the Chief Warden or Master of the Work of the Scottish Masons and the similar officer among the English, upon whom Anderson has gratuitously bestowed the title of Grand Master. He was appointed by the King, and in the Regulations is sometimes called "the Master who protects the Craft" (*le mestre qui garde le mestier*), and sometimes "the Master of the Craft" (*le mestre du mestier*).

At a later period he was styled "Master and General of the Works and Buildings of the King in the Art of Masonry," and still later "Master General of the Buildings, Bridges, and Roads of the King."

It is worthy of notice that one of these Regulations refers to a privilege as having been enjoyed by the Craft according to an uninterrupted tradition from the time of Charles Martel. This reference to the great Mayor of the Palace as being connected with Masonry, in a French document of the 13th century, and which is believed to have a much earlier origin, would authorize the hypothesis that the story of the connection of Charles Martel with Masonry

which is attributed to him in the English legend was derived by the English Masons from those French builders who both history and tradition concur in saying brought their art into England at a very early period.

The confounding of the name of Charles Martel the Warrior with that of his grandson Charlemagne, the Civilizer—if confusion there was, as is strongly to be suspected—must be attributed to the French and not to the English Masons.

The statutes of the Community, Corporation, or Guild of Masons were confirmed by Charles IX. and Henry IV. in the 16th, and by Louis XIII. and Louis XIV. in the 17th century. A great many letters-patent and decrees of the King's council are in existence, which define the jurisdictional powers of the Masters-General of the Buildings, and which contain regulations that release the Masons from all judicial summonses and from all judgments pronounced against them in other jurisdictions, remitting them to the Masters-General of the Buildings as their natural judges.

Some of these letters-patent related to the police of the Craft. Thus those of 1574 prescribed that Apprentices should be received by the Warden (*Maitre Garde*), and regulated the fee which should be paid under various circumstances. By an edict of October, 1574, sworn Master Masons were appointed as assistants to the Warden, who were to visit and inspect the works in Paris and the suburbs. These were at first twenty in number, but they were subsequently increased to sixty.

The Master-General of the Buildings had two jurisdictions, one which had existed for several centuries, and the other, which was established in the year 1645. The seat of the former was at Paris, in the Chatelet; that of the latter at Versailles.

Three architects, says Lacroix, who bore the title of "King's Counsellors, Architects, and Masters-General of the Buildings," exercised their jurisdiction year by year. They decided all disputes between the employers and the workmen and between the workmen themselves. Their courts were held on Mondays and Fridays, and there was an appeal from their judgment to the parliament.

In 1789 the Revolution in proclaiming freedom of labor abolished all corporative regulations and exempted the workmen from any sort of restraint, while at the same time they were deprived of all special privileges.

The Operative Masons of France, at the present day, constitute a large Confraternity, who have a kind of organization, but very singularly they are the only body of workmen who do not practice the system of *compagnage* or fellowship adopted by the other trades.

They have, however, their legends, and pretend that they are the successors of the Tyrians, who wrought at the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, calling themselves, therefore, the children of Solomon.

But they have no corporate existence and must be considered as working only on an independent and voluntary principle. There is, apparently, no similitude between them and the *Compagnons de la tour*, or brotherhoods of the other handicrafts in France. According to Larousse, they do not possess nor practice the *topage*, challenge, or formula of salutation by which the members of any one of these brotherhoods are enabled to recognize each other when meeting in a strange place.

From the sketch of the progress of architecture as a science and its practical development in the art of building in Gaul and in France, as presented in this chapter, we learn that the origin of the French Freemasons can not be traced as precisely as we do that of the German and British.

Rebold<sup>1</sup> says, very correctly, that the Masonic corporations never presented in France the peculiar character that they had in England and Scotland, and that hence their influence on the progress of civilization was much less than in those countries.

He further affirms that the custom adopted by the architectural corporations, of affiliating men of learning and condition as patrons or honorary members, appears to have resulted in France, as it had in other countries, namely, in the formation, outside of the corporations, of lodges for the propagation of the humanitarian doctrines of the institution; and he adds that when the Masonic corporations were dissolved in France at the beginning of the 16th century, lodges of this nature appear then to have existed.

All this is, however, mere assumption—an hypothesis and not an historical fact. Rebold himself admits that there is no longer any trace to be found of these Speculative Lodges.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> " Histoire des Trois Grandes Loges," p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Nous n'en trouvons plus aucune trace. Rebold, ut supra.

In fact, there never was in France that gradual development of Speculative out of Operative Masonry which took place in England and in Scotland.

The Speculative Masonry of France came to it, not out of any change in or any action of the Masonic guilds or corporations, by which they abandoned their Operative and assumed a Speculative character. The Speculative lodges, the lodges of Free and accepted Masons, which we find springing up in Paris about that epoch, were due to a direct importation from London and under the authority of the Speculative Grand Lodge of England.

The history of the rise and progress of Speculative Masonry in France comprises, therefore, a distinct topic, to be treated in a future chapter.

But we must first discuss the condition of Masonry in other countries and at other epochs.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE TRAVELING FREEMASONS OF LOMBARDY OR THE MASTERS OF COMO



IN the effort to trace the gradual growth of the modern system of Speculative Masonry out of the ancient organization of Operative Masons, we are arrested by an important era when the Guilds of architects and builders, issued about the 10th century from the north of Italy and under the name of "Traveling Freemasons," perambulated Europe, and with the patronage of the churches extended the principles of their art into every country from Germany to Scotland.

Before we can properly appreciate the events connected with the origin of this body of organized Masons as the undoubted link which connects the artificers of the Roman Colleges with the Masonic Guilds which sprang up in Gaul, in Germany, and in Britain, we must take a brief view of the condition of the Roman Empire in respect to the cultivation of the arts at the time of its declension and after the seat of government had been removed from Rome to Byzantium.

Mr. Thomas Hope has devoted some thirty pages of his *Historical Essay on Architecture* to an investigation of the circumstances which toward the end of the 10th century affected architecture, generally and extensively, throughout Europe. To this admirable inquiry I shall be indebted for many of the details and leading ideas which will constitute the present chapter.

In this work, Mr. Hope remarks that the architecture of Christian Greece and Rome, that is to say, the Byzantine and the Roman styles, exhibited, while it was confined within the limits bounded by the Alps, more local diversities than after it had crossed the mountain-ranges and advanced successively through France and Germany to the farthest inhabited regions of northern Europe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hope, "Historical Essay on Architecture," p. 220.

But as this advancement from the plains of Italy into more northern regions was accompanied by a style of architecture the adoption of which was at once the cause and the effect of that united action which distinguished the Freemasons of the Middle Ages, it will be necessary to give a brief glance at the condition of architecture in the times which preceded the exodus of artists from Italy.

It must be remembered that it is impossible to trace with any prospect of certainty, the progress of events which finally led to the institution of Speculative Masonry, unless we direct our attention to the early history of Operative Masonry.

Though Speculative and Operative Masonry never were and never can be identical—a mistake into which early Masonic historians like Dr. Anderson have fallen—yet it must be always remembered that the former sprung by a process of mental elaboration out of the latter. Operative Masonry is the foundation and Speculative Masonry the superstructure which has been erected on it.

This is the theory which is advanced in the present work, in contradistinction to that untenable one which traces a connection of the modern society with any of the religious institutions of antiquity.

If then the old Masonry of the mediæval builders, which was essentially operative in its character, is the foundation on which the Freemasonry of the modern philosophers, which is essentially speculative in its character, is built, we can not pretend to write a history of the superincumbent building and at the same time totally ignore the underlying foundation.

It is necessary, therefore, to glance at the history of architecture and at its condition before and after the 10th century, if we would understand how Freemasonry in the beginning of the 18th century was transmuted from an Operative to a Speculative system, from an art of building to a science of philosophy.

It has been noted as an evidence of the union of principles which began to distinguish the architects of and after the 10th century, who called themselves Freemasons, that in the time of Cæsar a habitation in Helvetia differed more from a dwelling in the northern part of Italy, though the regions were adjacent, than the church reared in England or Sweden did from one erected in Sicily or Palestine, remote as the countries were from each other.<sup>1</sup>

Now let it be remembered that this unity of design was introduced by the Traveling Freemasons; that these derived a knowledge of the great principles of the art of building from the artificers sent by the Roman Colleges, in company with the Legions of the Roman army, into all the conquered provinces and who there established colonies; that those Traveling Freemasons communicated their knowledge to the Stonemasons of Germany, France, England, Scotland, and other countries which they visited in pursuit of employment and in the practice of their craft; and finally that those stonemasons having from time to time, for purposes of their own aggrandizement, admitted non-professional, that is to say non-masonic members into their ranks, the latter eventually overcame the former in numbers and in influence and transmuted the Operative into a Speculative institution.

Remembering these points, which give the true theory of the origin of modern Freemasonry, as it were, in a nutshell,<sup>1</sup> it will be at once seen how necessary it is that the Masonic student should be thoroughly acquainted with the history of these mediæval Masons, and with the character of the architecture which they invented, with the nature of the organization which they established, and with the method of building which they practiced.

To attain a comprehensive view of this subject, it is necessary that we should, in the first place, advert to the history of the kingdom of Lombardy, which is admitted to have been the cradle of mediæval architecture.

At the close of the 5th century, the Ostrogoths, instigated and supported by the jealousy of the Byzantine Emperor, had invaded Italy under the celebrated Theodoric. Odoacer, who then ruled over the Roman Empire of the East, having been treacherously slain, Theodoric was proclaimed King of Italy by the Goths. He reigned for thirty-three years, during the greater part of which long period he was distinguished for his religious toleration, his administration of justice, and the patronage of the arts.

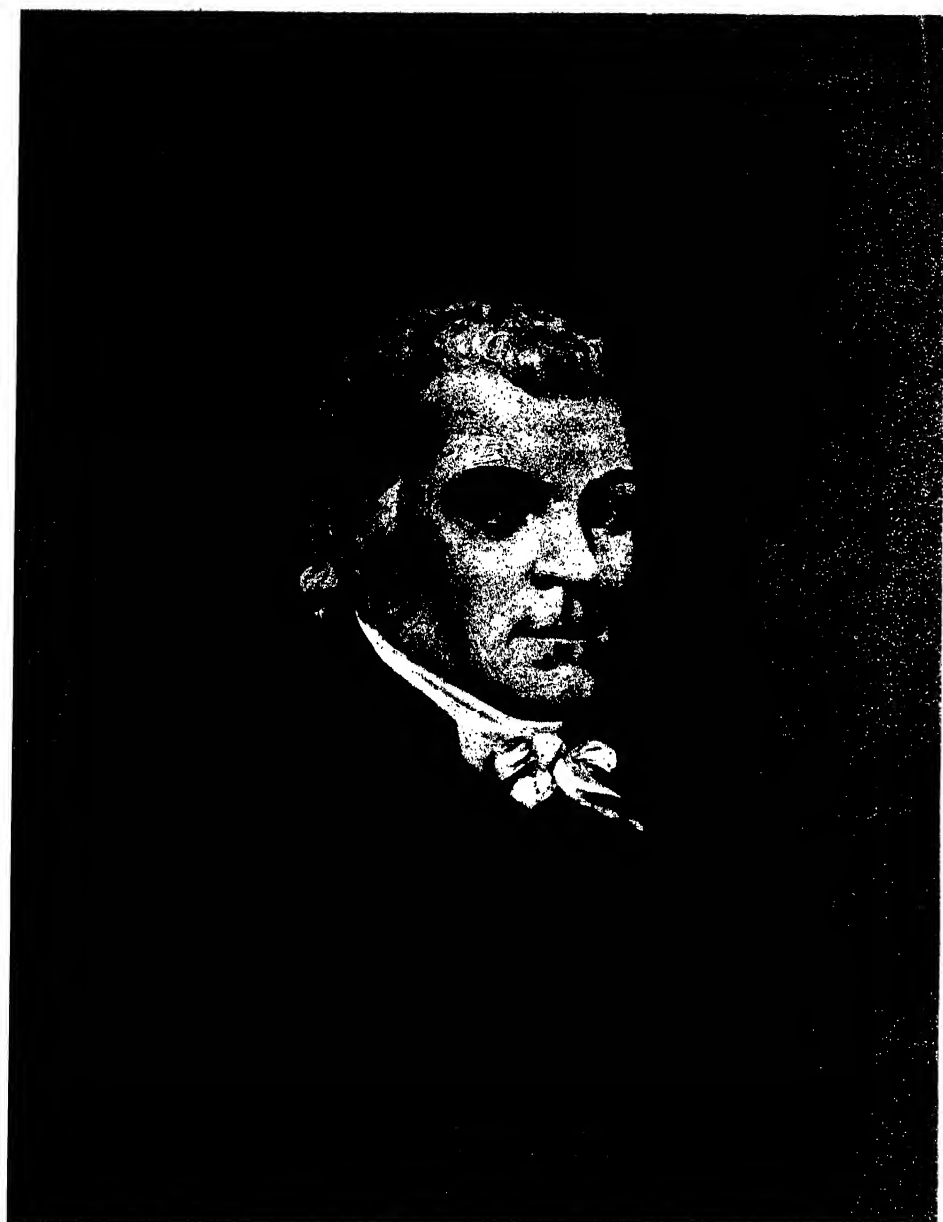
In a passage written by Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, who was the Chancellor of Theodoric, the Minister describes, in a glowing panegyric, the exalted condition of architecture during the reign of that monarch. Tiraboschi, who cites the passage in his *History of*

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<sup>1</sup> Translation by W. H. Leeds, London, 1836, p. 17.

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*the Sciences in Italy*, attributes this flourishing state of the art to the influence of the Goths. But Moller, in his *Memorials of German Gothic Architecture*, dissents from this view, especially as the Gothic domination in Italy lasted scarcely more than half a century, and contends that were it even demonstrable that architecture had been at that time such as Cassiodorus describes it, the fact is to be ascribed rather to the Byzantine Romans, among whom he thinks that we must search for all that, at that era, was preserved of the city and the sciences.

The Goths were finally driven out of Italy in the reign of Justinian, and by the armies of the renowned Belisarius. This event occurred about the middle of the 6th century.

They were succeeded by another tribe of semi-barbarians, who, though they did not, as the Ostrogoths had done, assume the domination of the whole of the Italian peninsular, yet exerted an influence on the state of mediæval architecture that produced results of most interesting character.

The Longobardi, a word which by a generally accepted etymology signifies the Longbeards, a title which they obtained from their manner of wearing that appendage to the face, were a Scandinavian tribe who, coming down from their almost arctic home, first settled on the eastern banks of the Elbe, but gradually extended their migrations southwardly until in the year 568 they invaded Italy, and founded in its northeastern part the kingdom which to this day bears the name of Lombardy.

The kingdom of Lombardy existed in a condition of prosperity for two hundred years, but was finally obliterated toward the end of the 8th century, in 774, from the roll of independent monarchies by the victorious arms of Charlemagne.

During that period it had been governed by one-and-twenty kings, several of whom displayed great talents and who left their monuments in the wisdom and prudence of the laws which they gave to the kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

In their first invasion under Alboin, their King, the Longo-

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<sup>1</sup> Sismondi, "Histoire des Republiques Italiennes du Moyen Age," tome i., p. 14, Charles Butler says that no ancient code of law is more famous than the "Law of the Lombards;" none discovers more evident traces of the feudal policy. It survived the destruction of that empire by Charlemagne, and is said to be in force even now in some cities of Italy. "Horæ Judicæ Subsecivæ," p. 85.



bards, or, as they were more briefly called, the Lombards, who were a fierce and warlike people, were pagans, and inflicted many persecutions on the Roman Christians. But their manners became gradually more mild, and in the year 587, Anthairs, their third monarch, embraced Christianity according to the faith of the Arians. His successor afterward adopted the orthodox or Catholic creed.

It was in the 6th century that the germs of the interference of the Church with the arts and sciences, and the control of architecture, were first planted. During the repeated incursions of barbarians, the gradual decline and ultimate fall of the power of the Roman Empire, and the continual recurrence of wars, the arts and sciences would have been totally extinguished had they not found a place of refuge among the priests, the bishops, and the monastic orders.

Whatever there was remaining of the old culture was preserved from perishing in the monasteries, the churches, and the dwellings of the ecclesiastics. Schools were erected in the cathedral churches in which youths were instructed by the bishop or someone appointed by him, in the knowledge of the seven liberal arts and sciences. In the monasteries the monks and nuns devoted as a part of their discipline a certain portion of their time to reading the works of the ancient doctors, or in copying and dispersing manuscripts of classical as well as Christian writers.

To these establishments, says Mosheim, are we indebted for the preservation and possession of all the ancient authors who thus escaped the fury of barbaric ignorance.

Architecture, which because its principles were generally and almost exclusively applied to the construction of churches and other religious edifices had become almost a sacred art, was at first and for a long time under the entire control of the clergy. The laity were either an ignorant peasantry or soldiers trained to war; the ecclesiastics alone exercised the arts, and especially architecture. Missionaries sent to teach the Christian faith carried with them into the fields of their labor, builders whom they directed in the construction of the new churches which they made their converts erect.<sup>1</sup>

Ecclesiastical writers have remarked upon the incredible number of churches which, under the influence of religious enthusiasm, were

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<sup>1</sup> "Historical Essay on Architecture," p. 213.

erected all over Europe, but more especially in Gaul and Italy at so early a period as the 6th century.

Lombardy is, as Mr. Hope has remarked, "the country in which associations of Freemasons were first formed, and which from its more recent civilization afforded few ancient temples whence materials might be supplied, was the first after the decline of the Roman Empire to endow architecture with a complete and connected system of forms, which soon prevailed wherever the Latin Church spread its influence from the shores of the Baltic to those of the Mediterranean."<sup>1</sup>

Moller, a learned German writer on architecture,<sup>2</sup> asserts that the Lombards were in the habit of building much, and appear to have quickly attained a higher degree of civilization than the Goths, to whom they succeeded. As a proof of their skill and architectural culture we may refer to D'Agincourt's *History of Art by its Monuments*,<sup>3</sup> where is exhibited a plate of the church of St. Julia near Bergamo, that of St. Michael at Pavia, and that of the round church of St. Momus, all of which he ascribes to the Lombards. Hope also enumerates among the churches erected in what he calls the Lombard style the Basilica of St. Eustorgio, which was built in the 7th or 8th century.

But, as in the case of the Goths, Moller ascribes whatever there was of excellence in Lombard architecture not to the Lombards themselves, who were originally a rude, invading people who adopted the civilized manners of the people whom they conquered as well as their architecture, but to the Byzantine Romans.

Other writers on this subject do not concur with Moller in this view.<sup>4</sup> It is not denied that there was a constant influx of Grecian artists from Byzantium into Lombardy, who unquestionably must have influenced the condition of the arts by their superior skill; it can not be doubted that at the time of the extinction of their kingdom they had attained a very considerable share of civilization, and had made much progress in the art of building. This is evident from the few monuments that still remain as well as from the fact

<sup>1</sup> "Historical Essay on Architecture," p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> See Moller's "Memorials of German Gothic Architecture," translated by W. H. Leeds, London, 1836, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> "L'Histoire de l'art par les monumens," Pl. xxiv.

<sup>4</sup> See Sismondi, "Histoire des Repub. Italy," ch. i.

that Charlemagne made but little change in their government when he established his Lombard Empire by their conquest.

Nicholson speaks of these Lombards in terms of commendation. He says that "Italy does not seem to have suffered much but rather the reverse from their government, and during their possession the arts flourished and were cultivated with greater success than during the periods either immediately preceding or following. It is certain that they gave a great impetus to building, for during the two hundred years of their sway the northern and central portions of Italy had become studded with churches and baptisteries."<sup>1</sup>

We may therefore very safely say that the ancient architecture of the Romans derived from their Colleges of Artificers was imitated by the Lombards and with its inevitable improvements brought to them from Byzantium by Grecian architects was subsequently extended over Europe.

But it was only after the conquest of Lombardy by Charlemagne that that province began to assume that high place in architecture which was won for it by the labors of the builders who disseminated over all Europe the principles of the new style which they had invented.

This style, which was designated as the Lombard from the place of its origin, differed both from the Roman and the Byzantine, though it adapted and appropriated portions of both.

Notwithstanding that the rule over Lombardy by Charlemagne, a monarch whose genius in acquiring empires was equalled by his prudence in preserving them, must have tended to advance the civilization of the inhabitants, the long succession of a race of degenerate descendants had a retarding effect, and it was not until two centuries after his death that the architects of Lombardy established that reputation as builders which has so closely connected their labors with the history of Freemasonry in the Middle Ages.

It has been already seen, when this subject was treated in a previous part of this work, that the Roman Colleges of Artificers continued to exist in all their vigor until the complete fall of the Empire. The invasion of the hordes of barbarians which led to that result had diminished their number and impaired their organization, so long as paganism was the religion of the State. But when the

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<sup>1</sup> "Dictionary of Architecture" in voce Lombardii Architecture.

people were converted to Christianity, the Colleges, under the new name of Corporations, began to flourish again. The bishops and priests, who were admitted into them as patrons and honorary members, soon assumed the control of them and occupied the architects and builders in the construction of churches, cathedrals, monasteries, and other religious edifices.

What Whittington<sup>1</sup> has said of Gaul, may with equal propriety be applied to the other portions of Europe. The people were degraded, the barons only semi-civilized, commerce had not yet elevated the lower classes, and the arts had made but little progress among the higher classes. It was therefore chiefly through the clergy that the art of building was revived, which under these barbaric influences had previously led to its decay.

All the writers who have made this subject a study agree in the statement of the great influence of the clergy in the practice and propagation of mediæval architecture. Fergusson goes so far as to say that in the 13th century the Masons, though skilled in hewing and setting stones and acquainted with all the inventions and improvements in their art, never exercised their calling, except under the guidance of some superior person, who was a bishop, an abbot, or an accomplished layman.<sup>2</sup>

This too broad assertion is, however, hardly reconcilable with the fact that in France alone in the 13th century, to say nothing of England, Italy, or Germany, there were many architects who, though neither bishops nor abbots, both designed and built great works. Such, for instance, as Hugues Libergier, the builder of the Cathedral of Rheims, Robert de Lusarches, the builder of the Cathedral of Amiens, and Eudes de Montreuil who, says Whittington, was "an artist equally remarkable for his scientific knowledge and the boldness of his conceptions. He accompanied St. Louis in his expeditions to the Holy Land, where he fortified the city and port of Joppa, and on his return to France, was employed by the King in the constructing of several religious buildings."<sup>3</sup>

The important place occupied by the Church in the revival of architecture can not, however, be too highly estimated. Though it

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<sup>1</sup> "An Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France." London, 1811, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> "History of Architecture in all Countries," etc., vol. i., p. 479.

<sup>3</sup> "Historical Survey," p. 68.

would be an error to suppose that there were no laymen who were architects, it must be confessed that the most eminent ecclesiastics made architecture a study, and that in the construction of religious houses, the bishops or abbots designed the plans and the monks executed them. And even if the architect and the Masons were laymen, the house was almost always built under the superintendence and direction of some ecclesiastic of high rank.

The view taken of this subject is the one that is historically the most tenable. Whittington's language is worthy of quotation.

"In those ages of barbarism, when the lay portion of the community was fully employed in warfare and devastation, when churches and convents were the only retreats of peace and security, they also became the chief foci of productive industry. Convents have long been celebrated as the chief asylums of letters in those ages. They also deserve to be remembered as the sole conservators of art; not only painting, sculpture, enameling, engraving, and portraiture, but even architecture was chiefly exercised in them; and the more as the edifices which showed any elegance of skill were only required for sacred purposes. In every region where a religious order wanted a new church or convent, it was an ordinary thing for the superior, the prior, the abbot, nay, the bishop, to give the design and for the monks to fulfill, under his direction, every department of the execution from the meanest to the highest."<sup>1</sup> It is important that the reader should be thoroughly impressed with the position and the services of the clergy in the architecture of the Middle Ages, because it accounts for the character of the institution of Stonemasons, who succeeded the ecclesiastical artists, and who though released from the direct service of the Church still remained under its influence. This is well shown in the symbols used by them in the decoration of the buildings which they erected, most of which belong to Christian iconography, in the charters and constitutions by which they were governed, which inculcate religious faith and respect for the Church, and finally in the transmission of a religious character to the Speculative Masons who succeeded them, and of whose institution it has been said that if Freemasonry be not an universal religion, it forms an auxiliary to every system of faith.

The only difference between the Freemasonry of to-day and that

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<sup>1</sup> "Historical Essay," p. 222.

of the 10th or the 11th century, in respect to the question of religion is that the former is cosmopolitan and universal in its creed, whose only unalterable points are the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, while the latter was strictly Christian according to the orthodox, catholic form in its belief and practice.

But notwithstanding the change from intolerance to liberality of sentiment which the progress of the age has introduced, it must never be forgotten that whatever there is of a religious or sacred character in the constitution or the ritual of the Freemasonry of to-day must be traced to the influences of the Church over the Operative Masons of the Middle Ages.

But it is necessary to resume the thread of our history. At the beginning of the 11th century Lombardy was the active center of civilization in Europe. It had prospered under the free institutions of its kings for two centuries, and on the extirpation of the royal line, the people shared in the benefits of the wise policy and prudent government of their conqueror, Charlemagne.

The workmen of Lombardy still maintained the relics of those ancient Sodalities, which had carried under the Roman domination the principles and practices of the Colleges of Artificers into the conquered provinces of the Empire.

The policy of the kings had led them to give various craftsmen the exclusive privilege of exercising their own trades, and under the form of guilds or corporations to establish bodies, which were governed by peculiar laws, and which were sought to be perpetuated by the introduction into them of youths who were to be instructed by the Masters, so that having served a due probation as apprentices, they might become associates and workers in the guild or corporation.

It was in this way that at that time all trades and professions were organized. In so far as respects the union in a corporation endowed with peculiar privileges, the Masons did not differ essentially from the shoemakers, the hatters, or the tailors. Each had its Masters, its Wardens or equivalent officers, and each was governed by its own laws and was recruited from a body of apprentices.<sup>1</sup>

There was, however, one very important difference between the Masons and the other crafts which was productive of singular results.

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<sup>1</sup> Fergusson, "History of Architecture," vol. i., p. 477.

This difference arose from the nature of the work which was to be done, and which affected the relations of the craftsmen to each other.

The trade of the tailor or the shoemaker was local. The custom was derived from the place in which he lived. The members of the corporation or guild all knew each other, they lived in the same town or city—and their apprentices, having accomplished their time of service and gone forth to see the world, almost always returned home and settled among their relatives and their friends.

Hence the work done by these trades was work that came to them. It was brought to them by the neighbors who lived around them. Every shoemaker in a city knew every other shoemaker in the same place; every tailor was familiar with the face, the life, and the character of every other tailor. While such intimacy existed there was no necessity for the establishment of any peculiar guards against impostors, for the trade was seldom troubled with the presence of strangers.

But it was not so with the Masons. Theirs was not a local craft. Work did not come to them, but they had to go to the work. Whenever a building was to be erected which required a force of workmen beyond the number who resided usually near the place, Masons had to be sent for from the adjacent towns and districts, and sometimes from even much greater distances.

There was therefore a great necessity for caution in the admission of these "strangers among the workmen" lest some should intrude who were not legally entitled to employment by having acquired a knowledge of the craft in the regular way; that is, by having passed through the probation of an apprenticeship to some lawful Master.

Hence arose the necessity of adopting secret modes of recognition, by which a stranger might be known on his first appearance as a member of the Craft, as a true craftsman, or be at once detected as an impostor.

Mr. Fergusson has adopted this view of the origin of signs and passwords among the Masons. As a scholar of much research, but who, not being a member of the modern confraternity, derives his opinions and deductions from history unconnected with any guild traditions, his remarks are interesting. He says:

"At a time when writing was almost wholly unknown among

the laity, and not one Mason in a thousand could either read or write, it is evidently essential that some expedient should be hit upon by which a Mason traveling to his work might claim assistance and hospitality of his brother Masons on the road, by means of which he might take his rank at once on reaching the lodge without going through tedious examinations or giving practical proofs of his skill. For this purpose a set of secret signs was invented which enabled all Masons to recognize one another as such, and by which also each man could make known his grade to those of similar rank without further trouble than a manual sign, or the utterance of some recognized password. Other trades had something of the same sort, but it never was necessary for them to carry it either to the same extent nor to practice it so often as Masons, they being, for the most part, resident in the same place and knowing each other personally."<sup>1</sup>

Freemasonry was therefore in the following condition at the beginning of the 11th century, so far as respects the Kingdom of Lombardy, to which the honor has been universally assigned of being the center from which the Masonic corporations spread abroad into the rest of Europe.

Lombardy being, as has already been shown, the active center whence the arts and sciences were radiated into other countries, architecture, as one of the most useful of the arts and one of an almost sacred character from its use in the construction of religious edifices, took a prominent place among the crafts that were cultivated in that country. Schools of architecture and corporations of architects principally ecclesiastics, were formed. These, passing into other countries and disseminating the principles of their science which they had acquired in the schools at home, have been hence known in history by the title of the "Traveling Freemasons of the Middle Ages."

Among these schools one of the most distinguished was that of Como.

The ancient city of Comum, lying at the southern extremity of the *Lacus Larius*, now called the Lake of Como, was, even under the Empire, a place of some distinction, as it had obtained from Cæsar the full franchises of a Roman community. It was probably the birthplace of the elder and the younger Pliny, and was certainly

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<sup>1</sup> "History of Architecture," vol. i., p. 478.



the favorite residence of the latter, who writes of it in one of his letters to Canidius Rufus in words of endearing fondness, calling it his darling. "What," he says, "is doing at Como, our darling?"<sup>1</sup> Pliny established there a school of learning, and at an early period it was noted for its foundries of iron. It retained its prosperity until the fall of the Empire, and continued in a flourishing condition under the Goths and under the Lombards. It retained its importance during the Middle Ages and is still populous and flourishing.

The architectural school of Como was of such repute in the 10th century that, according to Muratori, the historian of Italy, the name of *Magistri Comacini*, or Masters from Como, came to be the generic name for all these associations of architects.

The influx of Grecian artists from Byzantium into Italy at that time was, most probably, one of the means by which the Lombardic architects were enabled to improve their system of building. It was from the Greek Empire of Byzantium that the light of the arts and sciences, and of literature, proceeded, which poured its intellectual rays into the darkness of western Europe. At that time the word Greek, or Grecian, was synonymous with all intellectual culture.

We find a curious illustration of this in the *Legend of the Craft*, where Charles Martel, evidently a mistake for Charlemagne, is said to have been indebted for the improvements in architecture or Masonry in his Kingdom to the visit of Naimus Grecus. I have shown, in the first part of this work, that this expression simply means "a certain Greek." The legend thus recognized the fact that Europe was instructed in architecture by the Greeks of Byzantium, who visited Italy and Gaul.

The labors of these Masons could not long be confined within the narrow limits of Lombardy. Opulent as it was and populous, it could not fail to be fitted with churches and religious edifices, so that in time the need and the means of building more must have become exhausted.

There being no further demand for their services at home, they looked beyond the Alps, which formed their northern boundary, for new fields in which to exercise their skill and to avail themselves of the exclusive privileges which they are said to have possessed.

<sup>1</sup> Quid agit Comum, tuæ meæ que deliciæ? Pliny, "Epistles," lib. i., cap. 3.

A certain number, says Mr. Hope, united and formed themselves into a single greater association or fraternity which proposed to seek for occupation beyond its native land, and in any ruder, foreign region, however remote, where new religious edifices and skillful artists to erect them were wanted, to offer their services and bend their steps to undertake the work.<sup>1</sup>

The connection of these Freemasons with the Church forms an interesting and important part of their history.

Governor Pownall, in an article on this subject in the *Archæologia*, was one of the first to make the statement that the origin of Freemasonry as an organized institution is to be traced to the builders who issued from Italy about the 12th century and traveled all over Europe, disseminating the principles of their art and erecting religious buildings under the patronage of the Pope. On this subject he writes as follows: "The churches throughout all the northern parts of Europe being in a ruinous state, the Pope created several corporations of Roman or Italian architects and artists, with corporate powers and exclusive privileges, particularly with a power of setting by themselves the prices of their own work and labor, independent of the municipal laws of the country wherein they worked, according as Hiram had done by the corporations of architects and mechanics which he sent to Solomon. The Pope not only thus formed them into such a corporation, but is said to have sent them (as exclusively appropriated) to repair and rebuild these churches and other religious edifices. This body had a power of taking apprentices, and of admitting or *accepting* into their corporation approved *Masons*. It will be found that, claiming to hold primarily and exclusively under the Pope, they assumed a right, as Freemasons, of being exempt from the regulations of the statutes of laborers, laws in England which made regulations for the price of labor; secondly, in order to regulate these matters amongst themselves as well as all matters respecting their corporation, they held general chapters and other congregations. Doing this they constantly refused obedience or to conform themselves to these statutes, which regulated the price of the labor of all other laborers and mechanics, although they were specifically mentioned therein."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Henry, the historian, in speaking of them in his *History of*

<sup>1</sup> "Historical Essay," pp. 230, 231.

<sup>2</sup> "Archæologia," p. 117.

*Great Britain*, says that "the Popes, for very obvious reasons, favored the erection of churches and convents, and granted many indulgences by their bulls to the society of Masons in order to increase their numbers. These indulgences produced their full effect in those superstitious times, and that society became very numerous and raised a prodigious multitude of magnificent churches, about this time, in several countries."<sup>1</sup>

Sir Christopher Wren makes the same statement, and I quote at length the passage contained in the *Parentalia* (which is one of the rarest of modern English books), because it not only repeats the statement of Papal encouragement, but gives a very detailed account of the mode of traveling adopted by these wandering Masons and their usages in constructing buildings. His words are :

"We are told by one who was well acquainted with their history and constitutions that the Italians, with some Greek refugees, and with them Frenchmen, Germans, and Flemings, joined into a fraternity of architects, procuring Papal bulls for their encouragement and their particular privileges ; they styled themselves Freemasons, and ranged from one nation to another as they found churches to be built ; for very many, in those days, were every day building through piety or emulation ; their government was regular ; and where they fixed near the building in hand, they made a camp of huts. A surveyor governed in chief ; every tenth man was called a Warden, and overlooked each nine. The gentlemen in the neighborhood, either out of charity or commutation of penance, gave the materials and carriage. Those who have seen the accounts in records of the charge of the fabrics of some of our cathedrals near four hundred years old, can not but have a great esteem for their economy and admire how soon they erected such lofty structures."<sup>2</sup>

Hope is still more explicit in referring to the Papal patronage which is said to have been bestowed upon these Traveling Freemasons. He says that when they were no longer restricted in the exercise of their profession to Lombardy, but had begun to travel into the most distant countries, wherever their services as builders might be required, it was found necessary to establish a monopoly in the construction of religious edifices by which all craftsmen, even

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<sup>1</sup> "History of Great Britain," vol. viii., p. 275.

<sup>2</sup> "Parentalia," p. 306.

the natives of the country where they went as strangers were, if not members of their body, to be excluded from employment.

Now this exclusive privilege was one which no temporal potentate could give to have effect beyond his own dominions. In all those countries which recognized the Pope as the head of the Church—that is to say in all the countries of Europe—the authority of a Papal bull was the only power by which this monopoly could be universally secured.

The Masons, says Mr. Hope, could be regarded only as different troops of laborers working in the cause of the Pope, extending his estates by the erection of new churches; and he thinks that they thus obtained the requisite powers soon after Charlemagne had put an end to the rule of the Lombards in Italy, and had annexed that Kingdom to his own Empire.

“The Masons were,” he says, “fraught with Papal bulls or diplomas not only confirming the corporate powers given to them by their own native sovereign, on their own native soil, but granting to them, in every other foreign country which they might visit for purposes connected with their association, where the Latin creed was avowed, and the supremacy of the spiritual head acknowledged, the right of holding directly and solely under the Pope, alone, entire exemption from all local laws and statutes, edicts of the sovereign or municipal regulations, whether with regard to the force of labor or any other binding upon the native subjects; they acquired the power, not only themselves to fix the price of their labor, but to regulate whatever else might appertain to their own internal government, exclusively in their own general chapters; prohibiting all native artists, not admitted into their society, from entering with it into any sort of competition, and all native sovereigns from supporting their subjects in such rebellion against the Church, and commanding all such temporal subjects to respect these credentials and to obey these mandates under pain of excommunication.”<sup>1</sup>

This statement in reference to the granting of bulls or charters of privilege to the Traveling Freemasons is given by Mr. Hope, probably on the authority of Governor Pownall.

In February, 1788, a letter from Governor Pownall was read before the Society of Antiquaries of London, and subsequently pub-

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<sup>1</sup> “Historical Essay on Architecture,” p. 232.

lished in the ninth volume of the *Archæologia*,<sup>1</sup> under the title of "Observations on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture, and on the Corporation of Free Masons supposed to be the Establishers of it as a Regular Order."

Governor Pownall commences his letter by the assertion of his belief that the College or Corporation of Freemasons were the formers of Gothic architecture into a regular and scientific order by applying the models and proportions of timber frame-work to building in stone. Without stopping to discuss the question of the correctness of this theory of the origin of the Gothic style, which must be a subject of future consideration, I proceed to analyze those parts of the letter which refer to the patronage of the Freemasons by the Papal See.

According to Governor Pownall, the churches throughout all the northern parts of Europe being in a ruinous state, the Pope erected several corporations of Roman or Italian architects and artists with corporate powers and exclusive privileges,<sup>2</sup> particularly with a power of setting by themselves the prices of their own work and labor, independent of the municipal laws of the country wherein they worked. The Pope not only thus formed them into such a corporation, but is said to have sent them with exclusive powers to repair and rebuild the churches and other religious edifices which in different countries had fallen into decay, but also to build new ones when required. In England, into which these builders had penetrated at an early period, they were styled "Free and Accepted Masons."

In respect to the historical authority for the existence of this Papal bull, charter, or diploma, which is said to have been issued about the close of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century, Pownall says that being convinced from "incontrovertible record" that the Corporation of Architects and Masons had been thus instituted, he was very solicitous to have inquiry and search made among the archives at Rome, whether it was not possible to find there some record of the transaction.

Application was accordingly made to the librarian of the Vati-

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<sup>1</sup> "Archæologia," vol. ix., pp. 110-126.

<sup>2</sup> Although it was never competent for the Pope to create a corporation in England, yet according to Mr. Ayliffe, on the Continent that power was conceded to him and shared by him with the prince or temporal sovereign. "Treatise on the Civil Law," p. 210.

can, and the Pope himself is said to have ordered minute search to be made. But the report was that "not the least traces of any such record" could be found. Governor Pownall, notwithstanding this failure, thought that some record or copy of the charter must be buried somewhere at Rome amidst forgotten and unknown bundles and rolls—a circumstance which he says had frequently occurred in relation to important English records.

Unfortunately for the positive settlement of the historic question, it by no means follows because the Roman Catholic librarian of the Vatican could not or would not find a bull or diploma which in the 12th century had granted special indulgences to an association which the Popes in the 18th century had denounced and excommunicated, that no such bull is in existence. The policy of the Papal Church overrules, without compunction, all principles of historic accuracy and by its undeviating course, whenever the end seemed to justify the means, forged or suppressed documents are of no uncommon occurrence.

This question still divides Masonic writers. Krause, for instance, on the supposed authority of a statement of Elias Ashmole, communicated by Dr. Knipe to the compiler of his *Life*, admits the fact of a Papal charter, while Stieglitz, accepting the unsuccessful application of Pownall to the Vatican librarian, contends for the absurdity of any such claim.

The preponderance of historical authority is, however, in favor of the statement. There is certainly abundant evidence of the subordination of these Masons to ecclesiastical authority. And it is not unreasonable to suppose that the entire supervision of church buildings exercised by bishops and abbots, who, as Fergusson says, made the designs while the Masons only followed the plans laid down for them, must have been supported by the express authority of the head of the Church.

The Traveling Freemasons were at an early period simply the servants of the Church.

Another fact worthy of attention is that the relationship of trade and the frequency of intercourse for other reasons between the different cities of Lombardy and Constantinople brought to Italy many Greeks, some of whom came seeking for employment and others were driven from their homes by political or religious persecutions. Among these emigrants were many artists who

united with the Masonic Corporations of Lombardy, and infused into them a large portion of their Byzantine art.

These Freemasons, thus armed with the authority of the Pontiff, having been well organized at home, were ready to set forth, like missionaries at the call of the Church, to build cathedrals, churches, and monasteries as they might be needed by the extension of the Christian religion. From the 10th to the 12th century, and in some places even earlier, we find them perambulating Europe and spreading the knowledge of the art in Germany, in France, in England, Scotland, and elsewhere.

The remarks of Mr. Hope on the professional wanderings of these Craftsmen of the Middle Ages, though they have the air of romance, are really well supported by historical authority.

"Often obliged," says that pleasing writer, "from regions the most distant, singly to seek the common place of rendezvous, and departure of the troop, or singly to follow its earlier detachments to places of employment equally distant, and that at an era when travelers met on the road every obstruction and no convenience, when no inns existed at which to purchase hospitality, but lords dwelt everywhere, who only prohibited their tenants from waylaying the traveler, because they considered this, like killing game, one of their own exclusive privileges; the members of these communities contrived to render their journeys more easy and safe by engaging with each other, and perhaps even in many places, with individuals not directly participating in their profession, in compacts of mutual assistance, hospitality, and good services, most valuable to men so circumstanced. They endeavored to compensate for the perils which attended their expeditions, by institutions for their needy or disabled brothers; but lest such as belonged not to their communities should benefit surreptitiously by these arrangements for its advantage, they framed signs of mutual recognition as carefully concealed from the knowledge of the uninitiated as the mysteries of their art themselves. Thus supplied with whatever could facilitate such distant journeys and labors as they contemplated, the members of these Corporations were ready to obey any summons with the utmost alacrity, and they soon received the encouragement they anticipated. The militia of the Church of Rome, which diffused itself all over Europe in the shape of missionaries, to instruct nations and to establish their allegiance to the Pope, took care not only to

make them feel the want of churches and monasteries, but likewise to learn the manner in which the want might be supplied. Indeed they themselves generally undertook the supply; and it may be asserted that a new apostle of the Gospel no sooner arrived in the remotest corner of Europe, either to convert the inhabitants to Christianity or to introduce among them a new religious order, than speedily followed a tribe of itinerant Freemasons to back him and to provide the inhabitants with the necessary places of worship or reception.

"Thus ushered in, by their interior arrangements assured of assistance and safety on the road; and by the bulls of the Pope and the support of his ministers abroad assured of every species of immunity and preference at the place of their destination; bodies of Freemasons dispersed themselves in every direction, every day began to advance farther and to proceed from country to country to the utmost verge of the faithful, in order to answer the unceasing demand for them or to seek more distant custom."<sup>1</sup>

One fact peculiarly worthy of remark is that throughout all Europe, from its southern to its northern, from its western to its eastern limit—wherever the Christian religion had penetrated and churches had been erected—a surprising uniformity existed in the style of all edifices wheresoever built at the same period. No better evidence than this could be furnished of the existence of an association whose members, wherever they might be scattered, must have been controlled by the same rules of art.

Sidney Smith, Esq., in a paper in the *Archæologia*, alludes to this fact in the following language, in which he speaks of this association as having been established in the early part of the 13th century by a Papal bull:

"Thus associated and exclusively devoted to the practice of Masonry, it is easy to infer that a rapid improvement, both in the style and execution of their work, would result. Forming a connected and corresponding society, and roving over the different countries of Europe, wherever the munificent piety of those ages promised employment to their skill, it is probable, and even a necessary consequence, that improvements by whomsoever introduced would quickly become common to all; and to this cause we may re-

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<sup>1</sup> "Historical Essay on Architecture," p. 235.



fer the simultaneous progress of one style throughout Europe which forms so singular a phenomenon in the history of architecture."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Hope is subsequently still more elaborate in his remarks on this subject.

"The architects," he says, "of all the sacred edifices of the Latin Church, wherever such arose—north, south, east, or west—thus derived their science from the same central school; obeyed, in their designs, the same hierarchy; were directed in their construction by the same principles of propriety and taste; kept up with each other, in the most distant parts to which they might be sent, the most constant correspondence; and rendered every minute improvement the property of the whole body and a new conquest of the art. . . . The result of this unanimity was, that at each successive period of the Masonic dynasty, on whatever point a new church or new monastery might be erected, it resembled all those raised at the same period in every other place, however distant from it, as if both had been built in the same place, by the same artist. . . . For instance, we find at particular epochs, churches as far distant from each other as the north of Scotland and the south of Italy more minutely similar than those erected within the single precincts of Rome or Ravenna."<sup>2</sup>

Paley also speaks of this uniformity of style which prevailed everywhere throughout all countries as one of the most remarkable facts connected with the history of mediæval architecture. And he cites the remark of Willis in his *Architecture of the Middle Ages*, that whereas in our own age it is the practice to imitate every style of architecture that can be found in all the countries of the earth, it appears that in any given period and place our forefathers admitted but of one style, which was used to the complete exclusion of every other during its prevalence.

Paley very correctly accounts for this by the fact that Freemasonry was in the Middle Ages "a craft in the hands of a corporate ecclesiastical confraternity the members of which seem to have been bound down to certain rules."<sup>3</sup>

After what has already been said in this work, it is very evident that this "craft in the hands of a corporate ecclesiastical confrater-

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<sup>1</sup> "Archæologia," vol. xxi., p. 521.

<sup>2</sup> "Historical Essay on Architecture," pp. 238, 239.

<sup>3</sup> Paley, "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 206.

nity " must make a very important link in the great chain which connects the history of Freemasonry in one continued series from the first development of the art in a corporate form in the Colleges of Numa, until that transition period when the Operative was merged in the Speculative element.

Mr. Hope, who devoted much labor to an investigation of the influences which toward the end of the 10th century affected architecture generally and diffusively throughout Europe, wrote an exhaustive chapter on this subject in his *Historical Essay*, whence copious citations have been made in the present work. It will be sufficient in making a summary of what has been already presented to the reader, to say of these influences he considered the most important to be the establishment of a school of architecture in Lombardy and the organization of Guilds of Builders who, under the name of "Freemasons," perambulated the whole continent, passing over to England and Scotland, and taught the art of building under the inspiration of the same principles of architecture, directed by the same ideas of taste, and governed by the same guild spirit of fraternity.

Subsequently to the appearance of this work of Mr. Hope, Lord Lindsay entered the same field of investigation and presented the public with the result of his inquiries in a work entitled *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*, from whose pages much interesting information may be gleaned in respect to the condition of mediæval Freemasonry and architecture.

These mediæval Freemasons at first adopted the principles of Byzantine art in their construction of churches and afterward invented that new system known as the Gothic style of architecture. Before the organization of the Lombard school the architecture of Europe was that which had been derived from the builders of Rome, and all the churches constructed in Italy, in Gaul, and even as far as Britain, were built upon the model of the Roman basilica, an edifice which in pagan Rome served as a court of law and an exchange, or a place of public meeting for merchants and men of business.

As after the conversion of the Empire to the new religion, many of these edifices were converted into Christian places of worship, the word was used in the low Latin of the period to designate a cathedral or metropolitan church, and the style was readily adopted and followed in the construction of new churches.

The style of architecture which prevailed in Byzantium or Constantinople was very different from the Roman. The principal differences were the four naves as parts of a cross of equal limbs, and especially the surmounting dome or cupola, which was, generally, octagonal in shape.

This style the Lombard Freemasons adopted in part, modifying it with the Roman style, and finally developing the Gothic as a new system peculiarly their own. The history of this style, its progress in different countries, and the gradual changes it underwent, is therefore intimately connected with Freemasonry.

The question naturally arises why these Lombard Masons, who had derived their first lessons from the descendants of the old builders of the Roman Colleges of Artificers and who were surrounded by the examples of Roman art, should have so materially modified their system as to have given to it a much greater resemblance to the Byzantine than to the Roman style.

The answer to this question will be found not only in the fact that between the shores of northern and eastern Italy there was a very frequent, continuous intercourse with Byzantium, but also in the additional fact that the religious architects of Lombardy were very thoroughly imbued with the principles of the science of symbolism, and that they found these principles far better developed in the Byzantine than in the Roman style. "The basilica," says Lord Lindsay, "is far less suggestive, far less symbolical than the Byzantine edifice, and hence the sympathy always manifested for Byzantium by the Lombard architects."<sup>1</sup>

How the Freemasons of Lombardy became imbued with the science of symbolism and made it a prominent part of their art of building, are questions of very great interest, because they refer to the only bond which connects the Speculative Masons of the present day with the old Operative Masons of the Middle Ages. This important topic will be hereafter discussed in a separate chapter when I come to the consideration of that period of time in the history of Freemasonry which is marked by the transition of the Operative into the Speculative institution.

All that is necessary to be said here is that this symbolic style of architecture, beginning in Lombardy somewhere between the 7th

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<sup>1</sup> "Sketches of Christian Art."

and the 10th centuries, diffused itself gradually at first, but rapidly afterward over the whole of Europe.

For this diffusion of a peculiar religious architecture Lord Lindsay assigns the following reason as germane to the subject of the present chapter :

“What chiefly contributed to its diffusion over Europe was the exclusive monopoly in Christian architecture, conceded by the Popes toward the close of the 8th century, to the Masons of Como, then and for ages afterward, when the title *Magistri Comacini* had long been absorbed in that of *Free and Accepted Masons*, associated as a craft or brotherhood in art and friendship. A distinct and powerful body, composed, eventually, of all nations, concentrating the talent of each successive generation with all the advantages of accumulated experience and constant mutual communication—imbued, moreover, in that age of faith, with the deepest Christian reverence, and retaining these advantages unchallenged till their proscription in the 15th and 16th centuries—we cannot wonder that the Freemasons should have carried their art to a pitch of perfection which, now that their secrets are lost, it may be considered hopeless to attempt to rival.”<sup>1</sup>

The result of all these observations has been, I think, to strengthen and substantiate the theory which, all through this work, has been maintained, of the origin of Freemasonry as a Speculative institution founded on an Operative art. In every country where it has been founded we are enabled to trace its first beginning as a craft organized into a Guild, Corporation, or Confraternity, to the Roman Colleges of Artificers—the *Collegia Fabrorum*—which were originally established, or are said to have been established, by Numa.

Thus we find the architects who came out of these Colleges following the Roman legions in their marches to conquest, settling to work in the colonies, municipalities, and free cities which were established by the Roman government in the colonies of Gaul and Britain, and perpetuating the Roman taste and the Roman method of work.

So have we traced the progress of these Masons of Rome in the different colonies where they settled and continued their labors after the Empire had fallen.

<sup>1</sup>“Sketches of Christian Art,” vol. ii., p. 14.

And now we see the links of the historical chain more distinctly visible in the rise and progress of these Masons of Lombardy. Originally, undoubtedly Roman Colleges must have had their seats in the northern part of Italy, that highly favored province which, more than any other, had received its civilization and its art cultivation from the imperial city. Then, when the glory of Rome had departed, the Lombard kings preserved the Roman architecture, and after their conversion to Christianity, practiced it under the auspices of the Church.

Then came, toward the 10th century, those Corporations of Freemasons, who, imitating in their form of government the example which had been set by the Colleges, presented themselves as a Confraternity of workmen who, first having filled their own country with specimens of their skill, at length leaving Como and other cities of Lombardy, crossed the Alps and proceeded to communicate to other countries the knowledge of that art and the mode of practicing it, which they had acquired at home.

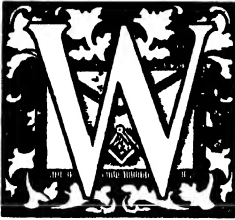
One of the first countries into which these Traveling Freemasons penetrated—perhaps the very first—was Germany. There we find, in the 12th century, the *Steinmetzen*, or the Stonemasons, who appear to have been almost a direct continuation of the Comacine Masters, or Traveling Freemasons of Lombardy.

These German Stonemasons have played too important a part in the history of Masonry to permit them to be passed over without an extended survey of all that is connected with their rise and progress, and with their wonderful achievements in mediæval Masonry or Architecture.

The Stonemasons of Germany will then be the topic discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE STONEMASONS OF GERMANY



WE must not look in the early history of the Germanic tribes for that gradual and uninterrupted growth of architecture and its cultivation as coming down to them in a direct line from the Roman Colleges. First heard of in the time of Cæsar, the barbarians who occupied the vast region comprised within the Rhine, the Danube, the Carpathian Mountains, and the Baltic Sea, were described by Tacitus as an illiterate and warlike people, whose religion was a gross superstition, who had no knowledge of the arts or of architecture.

The Roman Colleges, which had sent their branches with the legions into Spain and Gaul and Britain, were never planted in Germany. While those provinces were enjoying the advantages of Roman culture and civilization, Germany, overspread with forests and morasses, was inhabited by warlike tribes of barbarians, to whom the arts of peace were unknown.

As late as the end of the 3d century, Germany was an unconquered province, and the Roman emperors were engaged not in colonizing the wild region north of the Danube and east of the Rhine, but rather in striving to avert the southern progress of the barbarous tribes of the Allemanni from the invasion and occupation of Italy.

The Romans built, it is true, several towns of some note on the banks of the Rhine, but in the vast interior region which extended from that river to the shores of the Baltic Sea, there was hardly a single city previous to the 9th century.<sup>1</sup> To the history of architecture or of its connection with the Roman Empire, as in the case of the other provinces, there is no early German contribution.

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson, "History of Charles V.," vol. i., p. 217.

It was in the beginning of the 5th century that the Franks, a confederation of German tribes, began to take a place in the history of Europe. We need not dwell on the progress of their conquests. Sufficient to say, that having invaded the province of Gaul, they settled in it permanently and established the kingdom of the Franks which, in the course of time, became that of France.

The Franks were, of all the Teutonic tribes, the most intelligent, and though the most warlike, were the least ferocious. Hence in invading and in settling a Roman province, they readily adapted themselves, in great measure, to Roman habits and customs, and were very willing to accept and to practice the civilization of the more cultivated inhabitants of the country which they had invaded and had made their home.

The result was that from the time of Clovis, the first of the Merovingian race of kings who reigned at the end of the 5th and beginning of the 6th century, and who has been deemed the founder of the Frankic kingdom, the Franks imparted to the Germans the civilization they had attained by their conquest of a civilized people. Hence the introduction of architecture, and any Operative Masonry, beyond the building of mere dwellings, into Germany is to be attributed principally to the Franks.

We find very few monuments of the work of Roman builders in Germany, and therefore we can trace the progress of architecture, not by any regular descent from the Roman Colleges of Artificers, but only through the indirect operation of Frankic artists.

Indeed, according to Moller,<sup>1</sup> the authentic history of German architecture begins with the reign of Charlemagne, but the only monuments remaining of that period are the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle and the portico of the Convent of Lorsch near the city of Worms.

Rebold<sup>2</sup> says that architecture flourished greatly under Charlemagne, who introduced into Gaul architects and stonecutters from Lombardy. Rebold does not always found his assertions on well-authenticated facts, but in this case he has the concurrent support of other historians, more scrupulously correct in their statements.

The efforts of Charlemagne, who was a legislator as well as a

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<sup>1</sup> George Moller, "Denkmaler der Deutschen Beuenkunst," 4to. Darmstadt, 1821, cap. iii., s. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "Histoire Générale de la Franc Maçonnerie," p. 104.

warrior, to promote the civilization of the Germanic nations which he governed, led him,<sup>1</sup> after the subjugation of Lombardy, to draw materials from that comparatively cultured kingdom to advance his projects, and to introduce among his Teutonic subjects some taste for architecture, in which the Lombards at that time excelled the rest of the world.

Moller shows very plainly the evidence of this transmission of architecture into Germany from the south—that is, from Italy.

He tells us that in the beginning of the practice of architecture in Germany there were two styles of building which materially differed from each other. The earliest was a foreign style, evidently imported from the south—that is to say, from Italy or Lombardy—and a more modern one, which Moller says was invented by the Germans themselves. This was a modification of the first, and was intended to accommodate the building to the nature of a northern climate. It is in this style that we find the grandest monuments of architecture which Germany possesses.<sup>2</sup>

The leading form of the churches built during the 10th and 11th centuries was the same, says Moller, as that of the churches built at the same period in England, France, and Italy.

Here are two propositions, each of great importance in a train of reasoning for the purpose of tracing the history of early German Freemasonry through the progress of its groundwork, architecture.

First we have a confirmation of what has already been said, that the first architecture and, of course, the first Masonry of Germany were derived from Lombardy.

It is true that Moller (whose authority on the history of German architecture is not to be despised) thinks it erroneous to ascribe to the Lombards any material influence upon the architecture of the west and north of Europe. But almost in the same breath he admits that in the beginning German architecture was introduced from Italy, and confesses, also, that the Lombards were in the habit of building a great deal, and appear to have quickly attained a higher degree of civilization than the Goths.<sup>3</sup>

Accepting these admissions as strictly and historically correct, I

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<sup>1</sup> See Sismondi, "*Republiques Italiennes*," tom. i., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Moller, "*Denkmaler*," ut supra.

<sup>3</sup> "*Denkmaler*," cap. ii., s. v.



am prepared to accept the theory of Mr. Hope, that the Lombards, the *Magistri Comacini*, the Traveling Freemasons from the school of Como, in the 10th century, introduced their system of architecture into Germany at that early period of time.

Secondly, in the statement that the style of building then practiced in Germany was the same as that used in England, France, and Italy, we have a further confirmation of the theory so ably developed by Mr. Hope, that the Traveling Freemasons who perambulated Europe, and under ecclesiastical supervision erected cathedrals and monasteries, were a secret organization, distinguished by an identity of principles in the construction of edifices in all countries from the south of Italy to the north of Scotland.

While dwelling on this period we must not neglect to advert to the influence of religion, which seems to have played a very important part in the propagation of the science of architecture, a part which it is well worth considering.

Christianity was introduced into Germany, and the gradual civilization of the people proceeded with a few exceptions from the south and west parts of the country—that is, from those parts which were contiguous to Italy and Gaul.

It is there where the clergy, as the ministers and missionaries of the new religion exercised the greatest influence and were engaged in directing the construction of churches and convents, that we must look for the first appearance of architecture.

Architecture, whose boldest conceptions are exhibited in the construction of houses for worship, is very closely connected with religion. Hence, after the diffusion of Christianity, it became a necessary art, and we may trace its growth as concurrent with that of the new faith in Germany. Therefore, it is that we find so learned a writer as Moller ascribing the origin of the German building art in Germany to the time of Charles the Great, and to those countries bordering on the Rhine and in the south, where Roman culture and religion had been first introduced.<sup>1</sup>

With these preliminary remarks, which were necessary to show what was, in the early period of German history, the condition of architecture, of which the principles were almost always practically enforced in the form of organized Operative Masonry, we may pro-

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<sup>1</sup> “Denkmaler,” cap. iii., s. vi.

ceed to investigate its gradual development until we reach the era of the organized Stonecutters' Guild.

It is not until the 10th century that we find the Operative Masons of Germany assuming anything like an organized condition. It was in the reign of Otho the Great (crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle in 936), who has been called the Civilizer of Germany, that Roman culture began to be introduced into that country. The Germans, possessing no native or original architecture, readily, when the way was opened to them by the increase of intercourse, copied the monuments of Roman civilization.

In Germany, as in Gaul and in Britain, the arts were at first cultivated by the ecclesiastics, and the monasteries were their workshops. Especially may this be said of architecture, and still more especially of ecclesiastical architecture or the construction of religious edifices.

Sulpice Boisserée, who has furnished a most exhaustive treatise in his *Histoire et Description de la Cathédrale de Cologne*, gives so lucid a view of the motives which led these old Stonecutters to unite in a fraternity and to connect themselves closely with the clergy, that I am tempted to translate it, though it be at the expense of some repetition of what has already been said in other parts of this work. But we can not too often call the attention of the student and the disciple of Speculative Masonry to the remote origin from which the ponderous institution of the present day has sprung.

In those early days, when Masonry was beginning to take its place in Germany, whoever wished, says Boisserée, to assume the profession of an architect must begin by learning to cut stone. When he had become a Master in that art, there grew up between himself and his former companions a sort of fraternity which was wisely maintained by the customs and statutes of the Order, and which was especially observed among those who devoted themselves to the building of houses of worship. As they were persuaded that this work of erecting houses of God was a very noble and a very pious occupation, and as even the secular labor of constructing, for this purpose, monuments of solidity, elegance, and perfection required men formed by experience and united by sentiments of honor and fidelity, they, by their union, established a confraternity or private community, which was distinguished from the common

body of craftsmen by being exclusively devoted to ecclesiastical architecture and the building of churches. This fraternity preserved, in all their purity, the rules and practices of the art which they transmitted as a secret to the depository of succeeding generations.

This fraternity had an organization similar to that of the Hanseatic league. The Masters and workmen employed on edifices of less size or importance were subordinate to the architects of the principal fabrics, and the fraternity was, in the course of time, divided into districts which extended over all Germany. But this large development belongs to a later period, that of the 12th and 13th centuries, when the Stonemasons adopted that distinct organization as a Guild, which was first exhibited, or, at least, of which we have the first authentic records, in the labors of the workmen who produced those wonders of architecture, the cathedrals of Cologne and Strasburg.

This subject will be treated in the succeeding chapter. At present we must restrict our investigations to the architects and Masons of the earlier period.

The building of churches was, therefore, of course, under the care of ecclesiastics. The monasteries, says Findel, were the nurseries of science and civilization, the center of all energy and zeal in art, and the fosterers of architecture.<sup>1</sup> Fergusson thinks that in the Middle Ages, in the construction of religious edifices, the designs were made by bishops, who, taking as a model some former building, verbally corrected its mistakes and suggested his improvements to the builder.<sup>2</sup> He thus impliedly admits the existence of two classes, the clergy and the laity, both of which were engaged in the pursuit of architecture, and of which classes the former greatly predominated in the infancy of the art.

Fergusson, who is not always right in his conclusions, here at least, is correct. It will be found, as we pursue our history, that architecture as a science and Operative Masonry as an art began under ecclesiastical auspices and were confined to monks and monasteries. Michelet, in his *Histoire de la France*, speaking of the wonderful architecture of the Middle Ages and of the science of

<sup>1</sup> "History of Freemasonry," Lyon's Translation, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> "History of Architecture in all Countries," etc., p. 80.

mystical numbers which occurs in all the churches of that period, which he considers as the secret of the mediæval Masons, attributes this mystical knowledge to the Church.

"To whom," says he, "belonged this science of numbers, this divine mathematics? To no mortal men but to the Church of God. Under the shadow of the Church, in chapters and in monasteries, the secret was transmitted, together with instruction in the mysteries of Christianity. The Church alone could accomplish these miracles of architecture."

But in time, and indeed at an early period after the renaissance of architecture in the 10th and 11th centuries, the practice and eventually the control of architecture passed away from the ecclesiastics as an exclusive possession and began to be shared by the laymen.

There were then, in the history of mediæval architecture in Germany (as well as in other countries), three distinct epochs or periods.

First, when the science of architecture and the art of building were wholly in the hands of the clergy; second, when they were shared by the clergy and the laity; and third, when the science and the art passed away entirely from the clergy into the hands of the laity.

It was in the third period that bishops ceased to be "Masters of the Work" (*Magister Operis*) and the position was assumed by wholly professional lay artists.

The second period may be styled, if we borrow an expression from geology, the "transition period" of mediæval architecture.

In Germany this transition time is marked by the organization of the *Steinmetzen*, and the establishment of the workshops known as the *Bauhütten*.

The *Steinmetzen*<sup>1</sup> (literally the Stonecutters) of Germany were builders or architects or both, who in the Middle Ages, dating from the 9th century at least, associated themselves together in fraternities and were engaged, sometimes alone and sometimes in connec-

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Krause (*drei älteste Kunst*, iv., 362) thinks that the last syllable in *Steinmetz* comes from *masa*, *mets*, or *mess*, signifying a measure, and conveyed the idea that the chief object of a laborer in stone was to form his stone according to a just measure of proportion. Hence a *Steinmetz* would signify, literally, a stone-measurer. But I prefer to adopt the generally accepted etymology and derive the word from the obsolete verb, *metzen*, to cut. The *Steinmetzen* were the Stonecutters.

tion with a monastery or under a bishop or other prelate of the Church, in the construction, principally, of religious edifices.<sup>1</sup>

Fallon, in *Mysterien der Freimaurer*, cites various customs practiced by the *Steinmetzen* which would seem to indicate that there was a close connection between them and the modern Speculative Freemasons, who sprung up in the 18th century.

The most important of these customs may be enumerated as follows:

1. The German *Steinmetzen* divided their members into three classes, *Meister*, *Gesellen*, and *Lehrlinge*, answering to the Masters, Fellows, and Apprentices of the English Masons. But there is no evidence that these were degrees in the modern sense of that word. As has already been shown in England and Scotland, they were ranks, promotion into which depended on length of service and skill in labor.

2. The existence of some esoteric knowledge, some peculiar ceremonies, and some form of initiation in consequence of which strangers were excluded from the association.

3. The adoption of secret modes of recognition, by means of signs, tokens, and words, by which a strange member could make himself known.

4. Their establishment as a confraternity or brotherhood, in which each member was bound by solemn obligations to afford relief to his poorer brethren.

5. Laws and usages were adopted which resembled in many respects those of the modern Speculative Masons. Some of these were the natural result of their organization as a brotherhood, but others, such as their usages at banquets, the prerogatives of a Master's son over other persons, and some others, were peculiar, and were adopted by the Freemasons of the 16th century, and have been perpetuated in the modern Lodges.

The increase in the number of churches and other religious edifices naturally caused a proportionate increase in the number of workmen. The monks, not being able to supply the requisite num-

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<sup>1</sup> As in narrating the early history of Masonry in Scotland I was compelled to depend on the laborious researches of Bro. Lyon, so, in treating of mediæval Masonry in Germany, I have not hesitated to draw liberally from the invaluable pages of Bro. Findel's "*Geschichte der Freimaurer*," using, for convenience, the able translation of Bro. Lyon. But I have not omitted to consult also the works of Krause, Kloss, Steiglitz, and many other writers, both Masonic and profane.

ber, the laity were admitted to a participation in architectural and masonic labors. Still they were for a long time kept in strict dependence on their ecclesiastical superiors.

Hence the lay craftsmen lived in close connection with the monasteries and assisted the monks in their labors as builders, forming, for this purpose, associations among themselves and living in huts near the monastery or other building which they were erecting. To this usage Findel, with much reason, attributes the rise of the "*Bauhütten*."<sup>1</sup>

*Hütte* is defined as meaning a hut, cottage, or tent. *Bauhütte*, which is literally a building-hut, was the booth made of boards erected near the edifice which was being built, and where the *Steinmetzen*, or Stonecutters, kept their tools, carried on their work, assembled to discuss matters of business, and probably ate and slept.<sup>2</sup>

It will be remembered that Sir Christopher Wren, in the *Parentalia*, describes a similar custom among the English Masons of erecting temporary places of habitation near the buildings which they were erecting.

These they call "Lodges," a word which has about the same signification in English that the word *Hütten* has in German.

The *Bauhütten* were therefore the Lodges of the German *Steinmetzen* in the Middle Ages. The word continued to convey this meaning until the 18th century, the English expression Lodge modified into Loge was substituted for it, by the Speculative Masons who received their charters from the Grand Lodge of England.

Findel says that the real founder of the *Bauhütten* was Wilhelm, Count Palatine of Scheuren and Abbot of the Monastery of Hirschau. For the purpose of enlarging the monastery he had brought workmen together from many places. He had incorporated them with the monastery as lay brethren. He instructed them in art, regulated their social life by special laws, and inculcated the doctrine that brotherly concord should prevail because it was only by working together and by a loving union of their strength that they could expect to accomplish the great works in which they were engaged.<sup>3</sup>

The *Bauhütten* or Lodges flourished for a long time, principally under the patronage of the Benedictine order of monks. But at length the transition period of which I have already spoken began

<sup>1</sup> Findel, "History," p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., ut supra, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ut supra, p. 54.

to pass away and the third to arrive, and the Master Builders who had received their architectural knowledge from the monks separated themselves from them and established independent Lodges. As early as the 13th century there were many Lodges which had no connection with the monasteries, but were bound together in a general association that included all the Stonecutters of Germany.

Until the 12th century our knowledge of the Masonic associations, other than the schools of architecture which were established in the bosom of the monasteries, is unsupported by any documentary evidence. Indeed, the first written Constitution of the German Freemasons which has reached the present day is that of Strasburg, in the year 1459, which purports, however, to be a revision of the Regulations of the Stonecutters founded at that city in 1275. Of the latter there is no copy extant.

But as Winzer, who wrote on the *German Brotherhoods of the Middle Ages*,<sup>1</sup> has remarked, such regulations may have existed long before they had written constitutions, the necessity of which could have been felt only when the craftsmen had obtained a formed recognition, and when their laws were committed to writing to give them, as it were, a superior sanction.

Though this is but an hypothesis, it is not without the support of great probability. In the 11th century the Traveling Freemasons from the celebrated school of Lombardy had entered Germany and begun to propagate the principles and the practice of their art.<sup>2</sup>

Of this fact we find abundant evidence in the construction during that century of numerous cathedrals in Germany. Such were those of Bamberg, finished in 1019; of Worms, in 1020; of Spire, in 1061; of Constance, of Bonn, in 1100; and a great many others.<sup>3</sup>

Until we approach the period when the Lombard architects diffused the principles of their art in Germany, under the peculiar form of an association of Freemasons, which was not until about the 11th or 12th century, the history of Masonry in Germany is really only that of the Operative art in its simplest form, and deriving what

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Findel, "History," p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> En 1060 les conféries maçonniques de la Lombardie se repandent en Allemagne, en France, en Normandie et en Bretagne. Rebold, "Histoire Gen. de la Franc-Maçonnerie," p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Hope especially cites the cathedrals of Spire and Worms as specimens of the Lombard style of architecture.

*GOOSE AND GRID IRON TAVERN, LONDON, 1717*

The Grand Lodge of England was organized in this Building









little there was of it in common with the Masonry of other countries, principally from France.

To the Franks coming from Germany and invading Gaul was France indebted for its political character. To the same Franks, returning in the time of Charlemagne and his successors, to communicate a portion of the culture and civilization that they had acquired from mingling with the native inhabitants of the conquered Roman province, was Germany indebted for all the architectural and Masonic character that it had, until the peaceful invasion of the Lombard Freemasons in the 11th century.

From that time the Freemasonry of Germany began to assume a new modification as a Guild or Corporation of associated workmen, like those which we have already seen existing in Britain and Gaul.

To the German Freemasonry of that period we must therefore now direct our attention.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CATHEDRAL OF STRASBURG AND THE STONEMASONS OF GERMANY



HE Abbe Philip Andrew Grandidier was a learned historian and canon of the great choir of the Cathedral of Strasburg. He was the author of several historical works on Alsatia and Strasburg, where he was born in 1752. Among them were *Historical and Typographical Essays on the Cathedral Church of Strasburg*.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that he had paid much attention to the antiquities of his native city, and although not a Mason, his learning, his impartiality, and his abundant opportunities of acquiring information, gave no little authority to the views that he may have expressed on the antiquities of German Masonry.

In the year 1778 he wrote a letter to Madame d'Ormoy, which first appeared in the following year in the *Journal de Nancy* and which, copied ten years afterward in the Marquis de Luchet's *Essai sur la Secte des Illuminés*, has since been repeated in French, German, and English, in dozens of Masonic books and magazines.

This letter he afterward enlarged and made it the frame of a narrative which he embodied in his *Historical Essays*, published four years afterward. In this work he has advanced a theory on the origin of Freemasonry which, notwithstanding Dr. Krause's disparaging criticism,<sup>2</sup> has been accepted as true by most of the recent Masonic historians.

As the statement of the Abbe Grandidier is very interesting, it is here presented to the reader as a groundwork of what will be said, with some modifications, on the same subject in the present

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<sup>1</sup> "Essais Historiques et Typographiques sur l'Église Cathedral de Strasburg," Strasburg, 1782.

<sup>2</sup> "Kunsturkunden der Freimaurersbrüderschaft," iv., p. 251.

chapter. And I shall interpolate some portions of the letter which are not embraced in the essay.

The Abbe begins by saying that, "opposite to the church and the episcopal palace is a building appendant to the Cathedral and the Chapel of St. Catherine which serves as the *Maurerhof*, or workshop, of the Masons and Stonecutters of the Cathedral. This workshop is the origin of an ancient fraternity of Freemasons of Germany."<sup>1</sup>

The Cathedral Church of Strasburg, and especially its tower, which was begun in 1277 by the architect Erwin of Steinbach, is one of the masterpieces of Gothic architecture. The edifice as a whole and in its details is a perfect work and worthy of all admiration, since it has not its equal in the world. Its foundation was built with such solidity that, notwithstanding the apparent fragility of its open-work, it has to the present day resisted storms and earthquakes.<sup>2</sup> The tower of the Cathedral was finished in 1439. This prodigious work spread far and wide the reputation of the Masons of Strasburg.

The Duke of Milan, in the year 1479, wrote a letter to the magistrates of Strasburg in which he asked for a person capable of directing the construction of a superb church which he wished to build in his own capital.<sup>3</sup> Vienna, Cologne, Zurich, Friburg, and Landshutt constructed towers in imitation of that of Strasburg, but they did not equal it in height, in beauty, or in delicacy. The Masons of those different fabrics and their pupils spread over the whole of Germany, and their name soon became famous.

As an evidence of their renown he quotes Jacobus Wimphelinus, who flourished at about the end of the 15th century, as saying that the Germans are most excellent architects and that Æneas Sil-

<sup>1</sup> "Essais Historiques et Typographiques," p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> Lettre à Madame d'Ormy.

<sup>3</sup> From the Letter. Grandidier says, "I possess a copy of this letter in Italian." It is a pity that the writers of the 18th century, when referring to facts connected with Masonic history, have so often made their accuracy doubtful and their authority suspicious by careless anachronisms or improbable statements. In 1479, the Duke of Milan was a boy of fifteen, the son of the licentious tyrant Galeaz, who had been assassinated in 1476. The Duchy was administered by the Bonne of Savoy, the widow of Galeaz, as regent, during the minority of her son. Nor was Milan, torn at that time by intestine contests and the revolution of the Genoese, in a condition to indulge in the luxury of architecture.

vius (who was Pope of Rome from 1458 to 1464) declared that in architecture they excelled all other nations.

That they might distinguish themselves from the common herd of the Masonic craft, they formed associations to which they gave the German name of *Hütten*, signifying lodges. All of these lodges agreed to recognize the superiority of that of Strasburg, which was called *Haupthütte* or Metropolitan or Grand Lodge.

Afterward the project was conceived of forming, out of these different associations, a single society for the whole of Germany; but it was not thoroughly developed until thirteen years after the complete construction of the tower of Strasburg.

Jodoque, or Jos Dotzinger, of Worms, who succeeded John Hültz in 1449 as architect of the Cathedral, formed, in 1452, a single body of all the Master Masons who were dispersed over Germany. He gave them a particular word and sign by which they could recognize those who were of their fraternity.

The different Masters of the particular lodges met at Ratisbon on April 25, 1459, and there drew up their first statutes. The act of confraternity digested in this Assembly constituted Jos Dotzinger and each of his successors, by virtue of the office of architect of the Cathedral of Strasburg, as sole and perpetual Grand Masters of the General Fraternity of Freemasons of Germany.

The second and third General Assemblies of the lodges were held at Spire on April 9, 1464, and April 23, 1469. The Constitutions of the fraternity were confirmed, and it was enacted that a Provincial Chapter should be annually held in each district. John Hammerer, who lived in 1486, and James of Landshutt, who died in 1495, succeeded Jos Dotzinger in the place of Architect of the Cathedral of Strasburg and in that of Grand Master of the Masons of Germany. Conrad Wagt, who succeeded them, obtained from the Emperor Maximilian I. the confirmation of their institution and of the statutes of the lodges. The diploma of this Prince is dated at Strasburg, October 3, 1498. Charles V. and Ferdinand I., and their successors, renewed these privileges on different occasions.

This Fraternity, composed of Masters, Companions, and Apprentices (in German, *Meister*, *Gesellen*, and *Diener*), formed a particular jurisdiction independent of the body of other Masons.

The Society of Strasburg embraced all those of Germany. It held its tribunal in the lodge, or, as it is now called, the *Maurerhof*,

and judged without appeal all causes brought before it, according to the rules and statutes of the Fraternity.

The inhabitants of Strasburg resorted to it in all litigated cases relating to building. In 1461 the Magistracy entrusted to it the entire cognizance of such cases, and in the same year prescribed the forms and the laws which it should observe, and this privilege was renewed in 1490. The judgments which it gave received the name of *Hüttenbrief* or lodge-letters. The archives of the city are full of such documents, and there are few old families in Strasburg which have not preserved some of them among their papers. But its jurisdiction has been much diminished, especially since 1620, at which time the Magistracy took from the Lodge of Strasburg the inspection of buildings which had so long been entrusted to it. The necessity for this suppression arose from the abuse of its authority by the lodge.

The statutes or constitutions of the Freemasons of Germany, at first limited to the number of thirteen, were afterward extended to seventy-eight regulations. These were renewed and put in better order by the General Assembly of the Grand Lodge, held on August 24, 1563, at Basle, and on the 29th of the following September, at Strasburg, seventy-two Masters and thirty Companions were present at this Assembly, which was presided over by Mark Schau, the architect of the Cathedral. Twenty-two lodges directly depended on the Grand Lodge of Strasburg. The lodges of the Masons of Swabia, of Hesse, of Bavaria, of Franconia, of Westphalia, of Saxe, of Misnia, of Thuringia, and of the countries situated along the river Moselle, as far as the frontiers of Italy, acknowledged the authority of the same Grand Lodge.

At the beginning of the 18th century the Master Masons of the fabric of Strasburg imposed a fine on the lodges of Dresden and Nuremberg, and the fine was paid. It was only by an edict of the imperial diet of Ratisbon that the correspondence of the Grand Lodge of Strasburg with the lodges of Germany was interdicted.<sup>1</sup>

The Grand Lodge of St. Stephen of Vienna, which founded the lodges of Austria, of Hungary, of Styria, and of all the countries

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<sup>1</sup> This was because Alsace, of which Strasburg was the capital, had ceased to be a part of the German Empire and been annexed to France. This was the first precedent of the doctrine now held by American Masonic jurists, that Masonic and political territorial jurisdiction must be coterminous.



adjacent to the Danube, the Grand Lodge of Cologne, which had under its dependence the places on the west bank of the Rhine, that of Zurich, whose jurisdiction extended over the lodges of Berne, of Lucerne, of Shaffhausen, of St. Gal, and of the cantons of Switzerland, all these referred in all grave and doubtful cases to the Mother Lodge of Strasburg.

The members of this Society held no communication with the other Masons, who knew only the use of mortar and the trowel. The erection of buildings and the cutting of stone constituted their principal labor. So they regarded their art as far superior to that of the other Masons. The square, the level, and the compasses became their attributes and their characteristic marks.

As they were resolved to form a body distinct from the herd of workmen, they invented for their own use rallying words and grips for mutual recognition. These they called *das Wortzeichen*, or the "word sign," *der Gruss*, or the "salute," and the *Handschenk*, or "grip." The Apprentices, Companions, and Masters were received with certain ceremonies which were performed in secret.<sup>1</sup> The Apprentice when he was advanced to the degree took an oath never to divulge by mouth or by writing the secret words of the salute. The Masters as well as the Companions were forbidden to divulge to strangers the constitutional statutes of Masonry. It was the duty of every Master of a lodge carefully to preserve the book of the society, so that no one should transcribe any of the regulations. He had the right to judge and punish the Masters, Companions, and Apprentices who belonged to the lodge.

The Apprentice who desired to become a Companion had to be proposed by a Master, who, as his sponsor, bore witness of his life and manners. A Companion was subject to the Master for the time fixed by the statutes, which was from five to seven years. Then he might be admitted as a Master.

Those who did not fulfil their religious duties, who led a life of libertinism, or who were scarcely Christians, or who were known to be unfaithful to their wives, were not received into the society, or were expelled from it, and all Masters and Companions were forbidden to hold intercourse with them.

<sup>1</sup> In the letter the Abbe says that they took for their motto "liberty," which they sometimes abused by refusing the legitimate authority of the Magistrates.

No Companion could depart from the lodge or speak while in it without permission of the Master.

Every lodge possessed a chest in which the money given by Masters and Companions at their reception was deposited. This money was used for the relief of poor or sick brethren.

The Abbe Grandidier thinks that in these traits we may recognize the Freemasons of modern times. In fact, he says that the analogy is plain, and the allegory exact. There is the same name of lodges for their places of meeting; the same order in their distribution; the same division into Masters, Companions, and Apprentices; both are presided over by a Grand Master; both have particular signs, secret laws, and statutes against profanes—in fine they may say to each other, “my brethren and my companions know me for a Mason.”

For so much are we indebted to the letter and to the Essay of the Abbe Grandidier. The Abbe has been supposed to be the first writer who has adverted to the history of the Strasburg Masons as a fraternity. But this is not the fact. Nearly thirty years before the publication in the *Journal de Nancy* of his letter to Madame d'Ormoy, attention had been called to this subject by John Daniel Schoepflin, whose work, entitled *Alsatia Illustrated*, first appeared at Colmer in the year 1751. Schoepflin, who died in 1771, had been for fifty years professor of history in the Protestant University of Strasburg. In the work referred to he gives an account of the Masons of Strasburg, to which Grandidier must have been indebted for much that he has written on the same subject.

From the *Alsatia Illustrated* of Schoepflin, the following fragment is translated, that the reader may compare the two accounts.

“Before dismissing the subject of the government and judicial institutions of the city, some notice must be taken of the singular institution of the Masons of Strasburg, who formerly held not the lowest place in the city, and at this day of all the Masons of Germany occupy the highest. The construction of the magnificent cathedral, and especially of its tower, greatly extended the fame of the Masons of the city and excited an emulation among the other German craftsmen. Vienna and Cologne erected towers after the model of that of Strasburg, and the associations of workmen and the workshops of those cities were pre-eminent. To these Zurich was added, with which Cologne not long after was joined.

"On these principal workshops called *Tabernacles*<sup>1</sup> (lodges) depended from olden time all the rest of the cities of Germany.

"In former times there was a long deliberation at Strasburg, Spire, and other cities on the subject of constituting a common society of all the Stonemasons.

"Finally at Ratisbon, on St. Mark's day (25th of April), 1459, was instituted that great society under the name of a Fraternity, of which the Master of the work of the Cathedral of Strasburg was constituted the perpetual presiding officer.

"This institution having been for a long time neglected the Emperor Maximilian I. confirmed it at Strasburg by a solemn charter in the year 1498. This charter was renewed by Charles V., Ferdinand I. and by others.

"In the lodge tribunal the Masters and their Companions sat and judged causes and pronounced sentences according to the statutes without appeal.

"The authority of this tribunal was acknowledged by the Masons of Saxony, Thuringia, Westphalia, Hesse, Franconia, Bavaria, Swabia and all the region of the Moselle.

"The lodge at Vienna, from which those of Styria and Hungary are derived, and of Zurich, under which are those of Switzerland, in all grave and doubtful cases resort to the lodge at Strasburg as to a mother.

"All the members of the sodality have in common a secret watchword. We know that the society of Stonemasons spread throughout Europe has this form and origin. There is the same division of the Order into lodges, Masters of lodges, Companions and Apprentices; there are the same laws and secret words. A Grand Master presides over all.

"The Stonecutters<sup>2</sup> have an aversion to the common tribe of Masons who are enrolled with them, because they think not unjustly

<sup>1</sup> In classical Latinity the word "*tabernaculum*" denotes, according to Festus, a tent made like a booth or hut with planks with a boarded roof and covered with skins or canvas. The mediæval writers on Masonry have accepted it as the appellation of the "*Hutte*," which afterward became the "*Loge*" in German and the "*Lodge*" in English. The word is thus used in the Charter of Cologne, which may be taken or not, as the reader pleases, for an evidence of the genuineness of that much disputed document.

<sup>2</sup> Schoepflin makes in this passage a distinction which is worthy of notice, between the "*lapicida*," or stonecutter and the "*cæmentarius*," or worker in rough stones, such as are used in building walls. The mediæval Germans preserved this distinction, when

that their art of stonecutting is far above the Craft of the Operative Masons.

"The citizens of Strasburg often submitted questions concerning building to the judgment of the lodge, wherefore the Magistracy in the year 1461, committed to it the power of deciding on building matters, and prescribed for this purpose certain laws and regulations. To these officers was added a Scribe skilled in the laws. But as in the course of time this power of adjudication began to be abused, it was taken away in 1620 and committed to a smaller court."<sup>1</sup>

The reader may now compare these two accounts, that of Grandidier with that of Schoepflin. The former was written in the letter in 1778, and in the Essays in 1782. The latter was published in 1751.

Now it is very evident that Grandidier has borrowed almost his very language from Schoepflin, if they did not both borrow from Father Laguille, as I have suggested in a note.<sup>2</sup>

Both were men of learning—both were natives and residents of Strasburg—and both had devoted their minds to the study of the antiquities of that city and of the province of Alsatia. We may, therefore, accept what they have said on the subject of the Masons of Strasburg and their connection with the Cathedral as historically authentic facts. But we shall find that they are further confirmed by other documents, which are in existence, and to which both of these writers have referred.

Grandidier has, however, fallen into one error which Schoepflin had escaped, and which is to be attributed in all probability to the fact of his being a profane and not therefore conversant with the peculiar differences between Operative and Speculative Masonry. He says that while the usages of the two bodies of Masons, with whose existence at Strasburg he was acquainted, show a palpable

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they called the higher class of Freemasons, "Steinmetzen" or Stonecutters and the lower class, who were not free of the Guild, "Maurer," or wall-builders. The reader will remember the degrading use of the term "rough-masons," constantly used in the old Constitutions of England.

<sup>1</sup> "Alsatia Illustrated," tome i., p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> It is possible that both have borrowed from the Jesuit Laguille, who published, in 1725, at Strasburg, in two volumes, 8vo, a "Histoire d'Alsace, ancienne et moderne." I can not decide the point because I have not been able to get access to a copy of Laguille's work.

analogy between the Stonemasons of Strasburg whose association he supposes to have been founded in 1459 and the more modern Order that came over from England near the middle of the 18th century, he yet appears to be wholly ignorant of the historical connection that can easily be traced between them. While he gives a greater antiquity to the old association of Strasburg Operative Masons than to the recent one of Speculative Masons, he does not comprehend the fact that the latter was merely a modification of the mediæval system of the Traveling Freemasons from whom both associations were descended.

It is this error that he who would write a true history of the rise and progress of the German Steinmetzen must carefully avoid.

There have been evidently three distinct periods in the history of Freemasonry in Germany.

The first period beginning with the introduction of architecture into Germany, from Gaul, and from Italy, extends to the 12th century. In this period we have no documentary evidence of the organization of a fraternity. We know, however, from their works, that there were during that time architects and builders of great skill, and we have every right to suppose that the feudal system had the same effect upon the Masons, as it had upon other crafts in giving rise to the formation of protective guilds.

The effect of the feudal system in the Middle Ages was to concentrate power in the hands of the nobles, and to deprive the people of their just rights. The natural result of all oppression is to awaken the oppressed to a sense of the wrong endured long before the oppressor is aware of the injustice he inflicts.

The people therefore combined together by the bond of a common oppression to secure by their combination the undoubted rights which should never have been denied them. Thus it was that "the butchers, the bakers, the brewers of the town met secretly together and swore to one another, on the gospels, to defend their meat, their bread, and their beer."

Doubtless the Masons followed the example of the butchers, the brewers, and the bakers, and although, as Findel very justly remarks, we have no written constitutions to prove the existence of such associations, we can hardly doubt the fact. Those who were free born, of good manners, and skilled in their craft, it is reasonable to suppose, united themselves into associations whose members were

governed by a common obligation and constituted a common brotherhood.

The history of this period in German Freemasonry has already been discussed in the preceding chapter.

The second period begins with the organization of the corporations of Freemasons at the building of the Cathedrals of Cologne and Strasburg. Some writers think at an earlier period.

The third period commences with the introduction of Speculative Freemasonry into Germany in the 18th century under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of England, at London.

The second period alone occupies our attention in the present chapter.

It has been very generally believed that this second period—the period marked by a well-defined organization of the craft—dates its origin from the time when that style of architecture, denominated the Gothic, began to flourish.

In this style the high pitched gable and the pointed arch took the place of the low, flat gable and the semicircular arch, which had hitherto prevailed.

Of this style of architecture much has been written by the ablest professional pens, and much as to its history and its character has been left undetermined. When was it first known, and when did it cease to exist? Who was its inventor? And in what distinct and salient points does it differ specifically from other styles? All these are questions to which no qualified school of architects has yet been able to respond with satisfaction either to the querist or to the respondent.

One thing, however, we do know with very great certainty. And this is that it was the style universally practiced by the Freemasons of the Middle Ages in all countries of Europe, having been introduced about the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century.

We have also the tradition, which is not altogether a tradition, that these Freemasons, wandering from country to country, and planting everywhere the almost divine principles of their symbolic art, were really the inventors of Gothic architecture.

But be that as it may, the memorials of these arts, in the massive buildings which they erected, have so mixed up the history of Gothic Architecture with that of Freemasonry in the Middle Ages, that it

is impossible, in any treatise on the latter subject, to leave the former unnoticed.

"The spirit of the Middle Ages," says Frederic Schlegel, in his *History of Ancient and Modern Literature*, "more especially as it developed itself in Germany, is in nothing so impressively manifested as in that style of architecture which is called the Gothic. . . . The real inventors of this style are unknown to us; yet we may be assured that it did not originally emanate from one single master-mind, or else his name would certainly have been transmitted to us. The Master artificers who produced those astonishing works appear rather to have formed a particular society or corporation, which sent out its members through different countries. Let them, however, have been who they may, they did more than merely rear stone on stone, for in doing so they arrived at expressing bold and mighty thoughts."

Mr. Paley expresses the same exalted opinion when he says that mediæval architecture, by which he means the Gothic, "was not a mere result of piling together stone and timber by mechanical cunning and ingenious device. It was the visible embodying of the highest feelings of adoration and worship and holy abstraction; the expression of a sense which must have a language of its own, and which could have utterance in no worthier or more significant way."<sup>1</sup>

This symbolic style, in which the Stonecutter became not only the builder of churches, but the preacher to their congregations, and in which there were literally "sermons in stones," was gradually developed by the skill of the Freemasons, and lasted from about the middle of the 12th to the middle of the 16th century.

These are Paley's dates, but Dr. Moller<sup>2</sup> gives the style a more diffused extent and an earlier origin, though he confines the true Gothic within the limits of four centuries prescribed to it by Paley.

He says that the various styles of architecture which appeared in Europe after the decay of Roman architecture, and continued till the 16th century, when they were superseded by the modern Græco-Roman art, were all for a long time comprised under the general name of Gothic architecture. This epithet was afterward

<sup>1</sup> "Manual of Gothic Architecture," chap. i., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Denkmaler der Deutschen Baukunst," cap. i., p. 9.

applied to the pointed arch style which predominated in the 13th century.<sup>1</sup>

I have said that the invention of this style, so expressive in all its manipulations of a profound thought, has been attributed to the mediæval fraternity of Freemasons. And if this hypothesis be correct, of which there can scarcely be a doubt, then that invention was most probably made, or at least perfected, after the Masons had released themselves from ecclesiastical control, and withdrawing from the monks and the monasteries had become an independent Order of laymen.

"If we consider," says Boisserée, "the impetus given in the 13th century by the wealth and the liberty of the cities to commerce, to industry, and to the arts, we will readily comprehend that it is in the class of citizens, and not in that of the clergy, that we are to look for the inventors of that admirable architecture which was consecrated to divine worship. Notwithstanding all the great and useful things that the clergy have done for literature and science, they have been deficient in that liberty which comes from an active life in the world, and which is a necessary element in the elevation of the arts, as well as of poetry."<sup>2</sup>

This new style, the invention of the Freemasons after their separation from ecclesiastical control, prevailed at the same time in all the countries of Europe. In Germany the two most celebrated instances are the Cathedrals of Cologne and Strasburg.

Each of these cities has been claimed by different authors as the birthplace of German Freemasonry in its guild or corporate form.

What has been said by Schoepflin and Grandidier in reference to the pretensions of Strasburg to be the center whence Freemasonry sprung in the 13th century, has been heretofore shown.

Of Cologne the pretensions are equally as strong, although not so demonstratively expressed, nor has it furnished any documents, as Strasburg has done, of its claims to be the Masonic center of Germany. The document known as the "Charter of Cologne," if it had really emanated from the lodge of that city, would undoubtedly have been of great value as testimony in favor of the theory

<sup>1</sup> "Später wurde dieser Name nur auf den im 13 Jahrhundert herrschend werdenden Spitzbogen style angewendet."

<sup>2</sup> "Histoire et description de la Cathedral de Cologne," par Sulpice Boisserée, Munich, 1843, p. 14.



that makes Cologne the seat of German Freemasonry. But, unfortunately, there is now no doubt, among Masonic archæologists, that that document is spurious.

Boisserée, whose work on the Cologne Cathedral exhibits much research, seeks to remove the difficulty arising from the rivalry of Cologne and Strasburg by proposing a compromise.

He says that as the city of Cologne gave the first example of a fraternity of Masons, the Architect of the Cathedral was considered as the chief of all the Masters and Workmen of Lower Germany, just as the Architect of the Cathedral of Strasburg, which was commenced nineteen years after that of Cologne, was made the Chief of all the Masters and Workmen employed in constructions of the same kind in the countries situated between the Danube and the Moselle. Thus, he says, the lodge of Stonecutters employed at the Cathedral of Cologne, was the seat of the Grand Mastership of Lower Germany, and that of the Cathedral of Strasburg was the seat of the Grand Mastership of Upper Germany.

Afterward there was established, he says, a central Mastership for all Germany, and Strasburg, where the works were continued for a long time, disputed this pre-eminent position with Cologne as Lubeck did for the Hanseatic league.

It would seem then, that, according to Boisserée, there were at first two Grand Lodges, one at Cologne and one at Strasburg, between which the jurisdiction over Germany was divided ; that afterward there was but a single central head for all Germany, which was claimed by both Cologne and Strasburg.

But Boisserée produces no authority to substantiate this statement, and we shall therefore have to be satisfied with looking to Strasburg only as the seat of the first known and recognized head of mediæval Freemasonry in Germany.

But Cologne must not be passed over in silence. Whatever may have been the authority that its lodge exercised as a Masonic tribunal, it must at least be acknowledged that in its Cathedral, the purely symbolic principles of Gothic architecture, as the peculiar style of the mediæval Masons were developed in a profounder significance than in any other building of the time.

It may be permitted to suspend for a time our researches into the progress of mediæval Freemasonry and devote, as an episode, a brief chapter to this wonderful Cathedral.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CATHEDRAL OF COLOGNE AND THE STONEMASONS OF GERMANY



Y the general consent of architectural writers, the Cathedral of Cologne has been admitted to be one of the most beautiful religious edifices in the world. It is considered to be a perfect type of the old Germanic or Gothic style of architecture, and it has been deemed a central point around which have gathered the most important historical and artistic researches on the subject of the architecture of the Middle Ages.

So high did it stand in contemporary estimation, and so much were its builders valued for the skill which they had displayed in its construction, that, as Boisserée tells, the Master Masons of Cologne were often sent for to superintend the building of many other churches. Thus the continuation of the steeple of the Cathedral of Strasburg was intrusted to John Hültz, of Cologne. Another John of Cologne, in 1369, built the two churches of Campen, on the shores of the Zuyder Zee; and he adopted as his plan that of the Cologne Cathedral. The Cathedrals of Prague and of Metz were built on the same plan. In 1442 the Bishop of Burgos imported into Spain two stonecutters of Cologne to complete the towers of his cathedral.

To this prominent position of the cathedral and of its builders in the history of mediæval architecture must we assign the equally prominent position which has been assumed for it in the traditions of modern Freemasonry. The fabrication of that very popular, but altogether supposititious document, known as the "Charter of Cologne," is to be attributed to the fact that at the date assigned to it the Masons of Cologne were considered as the chiefs of the craft, and there was some apparent plausibility in assigning to them the duty of convening a Grand Lodge, whose representatives were brought from every part of Europe.

The present Cathedral is the successor of two others. The first is said to have been founded by St. Maternus, who was Bishop of Cologne in the 4th century. That edifice, if the account of it is not altogether traditional, and perhaps mythical, must have been constructed in the Roman method and by Roman artisans, for the city did not come under the control of the Franks until the 5th century.

The second Cathedral, the history of which is also very imperfect, is said to have been consecrated in the year 873. Of its having been burnt in 1248 there is no doubt. This edifice does not seem to have met the growing needs or the increasing pride and wealth of the church, for before its destruction by fire, Archbishop Conrad is said to have had plans prepared for the construction of a new one, which should surpass all existing churches in magnificence. And Archbishop Engelbert had designed to do the same thing twenty-five years before, but was prevented from carrying out his plan by his assassination in 1225.

The second Cathedral was burnt in the year 1248, and the new one was begun the same year. Larousse and some other writers state that the work was commenced in 1249. But Boisserée, upon whose authority one may securely rely, says that the foundation-stone of the new edifice was laid on the eve of the feast of the Assumption, August 14, 1248, by Archbishop Conrad, in the presence of the Emperor, Frederick II., and a concourse of nobility and ecclesiastics of every grade.

The solemn ceremonies which accompanied this event have been described at length by the historian of the Cathedral, Sulpice Boisserée.

The foundation-stone was deposited in the spot which was destined for the high altar, and where was temporarily erected a wooden cross.

After the preparatory prayers and canticles the Archbishop proceeded, with the assistance of the architect and by means of a chisel and mallet, to engrave the figure of a cross on the four angles of the stone. In the interior of the stone, in an excavation made for the purpose, was deposited an account of the ceremony, some images of saints made in consecrated wax, some coins, and other objects which bore relation more or less to the epoch of time in which the stone was laid.

Afterward the Archbishop blessed the stone, sprinkled it with holy water, and then delivered it to the workmen, who lowered it into the pit which had been prepared for it.

The Archbishop then descended, accompanied by several attendants, and after spreading some mortar with a trowel over the face of the stone, gave it a blow with a hammer and placed a second stone upon the first. The Emperor, the Pope's legate, and several princes and nobles imitated the Archbishop, and the trowel and hammer passed from hand to hand until it came to the architect, while the choir chanted the 87th Psalm, beginning "His foundation is in the holy mountains."<sup>1</sup>

The work was continued until 1509. During that period, the labors were often suspended in consequence of the sanguinary contests which took place in the 13th and 14th centuries between the city and the archbishops. Hence at the beginning of the 16th century, only the choir and the surrounding chapels had been finished. In succeeding wars the building suffered much, and would at length have been pulled down had it not been for the active exertions of a Fleming, Gerhard de Saint Trond, who caused subscriptions to be made and the work was resumed.

The historical question, who was the architect that drew the plans and first presided over their execution has never been satisfactorily settled; while the fame of Erwin Von Steinback has been preserved as the architect of the rival Cathedral of Strasburg, the name of the surpassing artist who was the architect of that of Cologne has been, apparently, irrecoverably lost.

There is a legend in connection with this which if of no value historically, is of some interest as a romance.

The Archbishop had called upon the architects of Germany for plans for the construction of the Cathedral. Many were submitted, but none were satisfactory to the prelate, who rejected them all.

Among the rejected applicants was a young architect, who was so despondent at his want of success, that one day he repaired to the

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<sup>1</sup> "Histoire et Description de la Cathedral de Cologne," p. 7.

I have inserted this description to show how the spirit of symbolism was preserved in all things connected with the architecture of those mediæval Masons, a heritage which they have bequeathed to their successors, the Speculative Freemasons. In the modern ritual for the laying of foundation-stones, it will be seen that some of the leading points have a very close resemblance to this Cologne ceremony.

banks of the Rhine and there meditated suicide. But before casting himself into the river, he tried, but in vain, to draw a new plan.

Suddenly the devil appeared before him as a venerable old gentleman, in black, and offered him a plan which he promised him should be accepted, but would not give it to the architect except in exchange for his soul.

The youth daring neither to accept nor to refuse the offer, asked for a day's consideration. To this Satan assented, and they agreed to meet again at the same place on the afternoon of the next day.

In the interval the young architect consulted the Archbishop and the canons of the Chapter, and by their advice he repaired to the rendezvous at the appointed time.

The devil again showed the plan and renewed his offer of an exchange—the parchment with the plan inscribed, for the soul of an architect. The youth snatched the plan out of the devil's hand and placed it in his bosom beneath a relic of St. Ursula.

The devil, enraged, exclaimed: "This is a trick of the rascally priests; but mark me, the Cathedral, the plan of which you have stolen from me, shall never be finished, and your own name shall forever remain unknown."

In the struggle to get possession of the plan, the devil's claws had torn off a corner of the parchment, and thus mutilated the plan.

The young artist having attempted to invent something which should appropriately fill the missing part, and always, after many trials, failing to succeed, at length died of chagrin. His name has passed into oblivion, and the Cathedral, for six hundred years, remained unfinished.

The story of the unknown architect of Cologne and his unhappy fate, told in different ways, has always been a favorite myth with the German poets. Thus Frederick Rückert:

"Der Meister, der's entwarf  
Baut es nicht aus, und starb;  
Niemand mocht' sich getraun,  
Seitdem ihn aufzubau'n,  
Den hohen Dom zu Koln."

*The Master who designed the plan did not finish it but died; no one since has dared to build it up; the lofty Cathedral of Cologne.*

There are but two names that have been proffered as claim-

ants for the honor of being the architect of the Cathedral of Cologne—at least there are only two names whose apparent merits are such as to have secured any sort of consideration. These are the celebrated philosopher, Albertus Magnus, or Albert the Great, and a distinguished Mason known as Maître Gerard.

Let us first dispose of the claims of the philosopher.

Albertus Magnus was born of an illustrious family at Laevingen in Swabia in the year 1193. At the age of sixteen he entered the Dominican Order, of which afterward he became the Provincial. Pope Alexander VI. appointed him Bishop of Ratisbon; but Albertus, having held the office for only three years, renounced the miter to reassume the cowl and retired to the convent of his Order in Cologne, and employed himself in giving public instructions in philosophy. He died in the year 1280 at the ripe age of eighty-seven.

Albertus's knowledge of the principles of natural science were so far in advance of the times in which he lived, and many of his experiments were of so extraordinary a nature that he obtained, in a credulous and ignorant age, the reputation of being a magician, and many wonderful stories were related of his power in the occult art.

Thus, for example, it was said that he had occupied thirty years in making an entire man of brass, which would answer all sorts of questions and would even perform domestic services. Another legend relates that on a certain occasion he invited William, Earl of Holland and King of the Romans, who was passing through Cologne, to a banquet in the open air. It was in the depth of winter, and the whole face of the earth was covered with snow. The king, however, was no sooner seated at table, than the snow disappeared, the temperature of the air rose to that of summer and the sun burst forth with dazzling splendor. The ground became covered with rich verdure, the trees were suddenly clothed with foliage, with flowers and with fruits; vines presented clusters of luscious grapes to the company. The table was loaded with dishes of exquisite food which was served by a train of gracefully dressed pages, who came, no one knew whence. But as soon as the feast was over, everything disappeared; all became wintry as before; the snow lay upon the ground, and the guests, chilled by the sudden change, gathered up the cloaks and mantles which they had

previously thrown aside, and hurried to the fires in the apartments.

Such an extravagant legend shows what was the reputation of Albertus among his contemporaries, who did not hesitate to ascribe to him the possession of an almost illimitable amount of learning.

It is not surprising therefore that to him in the uncertainty of who was the real architect, should have been ascribed the honor of devising the plans of the Cathedral of Cologne, especially since the erection of that stupendous edifice was commenced during his residence in the city.

To him, too, has by some writers been ascribed the invention of the Gothic style of architecture, of which the Cathedral of Cologne was one of the earliest and most magnificent specimens.

Those who have believed that he invented the plans for the construction of the Cologne Cathedral, have founded their belief on the profound symbolism of the plan, and on the supposition that Albertus was, according to the views of Heidelof,<sup>1</sup> the one who restored the symbolic language of the ancients and applied it to the principles of architecture.

But this seems to be but the exchanging of one conjectural hypothesis for another. It would be as difficult to prove that Albertus was the discoverer of the principles of symbolic architecture, which certainly does constitute, or at least among the mediæval Masons did constitute the distinguishing element of their style, as it would be to prove that he was the deviser of the plans for the construction of the cathedral.

If either of these hypotheses were satisfactorily proved, it would give much plausibility to the other, but, unfortunately, the required proof is wanting.

Hence Boissérée, who has carefully discussed the question, refuses to adopt the opinion which attributes the plan of the Cathedral to Albertus.<sup>2</sup> He does not believe that ecclesiastics alone were the possessors of symbolic ideas, but he is sure that an architect only could give expression to those ideas.

He therefore supposes that the plans of the Cathedral must have been devised by an architect. But Albertus Magnus, though justly

<sup>1</sup> In his "*Bauhütte des Mittelalters*," quoted by Findel.

<sup>2</sup> "*Histoire et Descrip. de la Cathedral de Cologne*," p. 12.

venerated for his vast erudition, never practiced architecture, and could not therefore have made the plans or superintended their execution.

The other person to whom has been ascribed the honor of being the architect of the Cathedral of Cologne is one Maître Gérard, or Master Gerard.

"Historians," says Boisserée, "are silent concerning this Gerard, as they are concerning all other architects of the Cathedral. I, however, consider him as being the first of them and consequently as the author of the admirable plan which is not less bold than it is ingenious. If the plan had been furnished by another architect, we must suppose that he died at the very beginning of the work, and this we have no reason for believing.

"There is still less reason for supposing that the plan was the production of some man of genius, versed in the knowledge of the art but not himself a professional architect; for the plan of an edifice so immense, of a composition so rich and bold, calculated with so much wisdom in its minutest details and with such a due regard to the execution, could have been invented only by an artist who, to great experience, added the most exact knowledge of all technical methods and the certainty of being able to realize in practice his happy conceptions."<sup>1</sup>

Hence it is that he declines to attribute the position of first architect of the Cathedral to Albertus Magnus, and assigns it to Master Gerard.

In the volume of the *procès verbaux*, or reports of cases of the Senate of Cologne, commenced in 1396, there is a list of the founders and benefactors of the Hospital of St. Ursule at Cologne, the name of Master Gerard is found and he is there described as the *Werk-Meister von Dom*, or "Master of the Work of the Cathedral."<sup>2</sup>

The *Livre Copial* of the Chapter of Cologne is preserved, says Boisserée, in the archives of the city of Darmstadt. On page 92 of this book is a copy of a charter in which the Chapter grants to Master Gerard a spot of ground on which he had erected at his own expense a house built of stone, in consideration of the services performed by him.

<sup>1</sup> Boisserée, ut supra, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 12.



In this charter he is styled "a stonecutter, the director of our Cathedral."<sup>1</sup>

As the date of the charter is 1257, which is only eight years after the commencement of the Cathedral, it is, as Boisseree has maintained, not probable that there had been an earlier architect who had died or been dismissed. And as the charter distinctly calls him a *lapicida*, a "stonecutter," and designates him as the *rector fabricæ*, "the director, or ruler of the Cathedral," I think the question may be considered as settled that Gerard was the name of the first architect of the Cathedral of Cologne and that he was a Mason by profession.

As to the influence which this building and the artists engaged in its construction had upon the organization of the fraternity of Stonemasons of Germany, historical records are silent, and we are left mainly to conjecture.

It is said by Winzer that Albertus Magnus altered the constitution of the Fraternity and gave them a new code of laws. But as at the same time, and almost in the same passage, he ascribes to the same person the designing of the plans for the Cathedral, we may be inclined to give no more credit to the one assertion than we do to the other.

But as the Cathedral is one of the grandest and most elaborate of all the works of Gothic architecture, and as that style was, it is admitted, the invention of the Freemasons of the Middle Ages, we arrive at the legitimate conclusion that the workmen who were members of that Fraternity, which came into Germany about the 10th century from Italy, but of the nature of whose organization, of the customs they practiced, and of the laws which they adopted for their government we have no documentary evidence, until the 15th century, when we find the ordinances of the Stonecutters adopted at Strasburg in the year 1459.

We have documentary evidence of the existence of guilds in Germany before the middle of the 12th century. "At that time," says Mr. Fergusson, "all trades and professions were organized in the same manner, and the guild of Masons differed in no essential

<sup>1</sup> Magistro Gerardo, lapicede (says the charter), rectori fabricæ nostre, propter meritorie obsequia nobis facta, unam aream latiore et majorem aliis prout ubi jacet, et comprehendit magnam domum lapideam, quam idem Magister Gerardus propriis edificavit sumptibus, duximus concedendam, etc.

particulars from those of the shoemakers or hatters, the tailors or vintners, all had their Masters and Past Masters, their Wardens and other officers, and were recruited from a body of apprentices who were forced to undergo years of probationary servitude before they were admitted to practice their art."<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that this statement is substantially correct, although there were some important differences between the guilds of Masons and those of other crafts, to one of which (the nomadic character of the former) he subsequently alludes.

We have a right, therefore, to conclude that at Cologne, during the construction of the Cathedral, the Freemasons who were engaged in that labor were already organized as a corporation and had their regulations, usages, and laws, though they have not been preserved to us in a written form.

But as it has been observed by a writer on this subject,<sup>2</sup> we have no reason to doubt the existence of such associations even before the 12th century, because we have no positive documentary evidence of the fact in the transmission of written constitutions; because it was not until they had succeeded in obtaining formal recognition, and when they were desirous of obtaining some special privilege that the necessity of a written Constitution was felt, so as to give it, as it were, a superior sanction.

Hence, though the Cathedrals of Cologne and Strasburg and some others of less grandeur were begun in the 12th century, the earliest extant written Constitution is that of Strasburg, whose date is about the middle of the 15th century.

Whether these Statutes of the Strasburg Masons were enacted for the first time in 1459, which is wholly improbable, or whether they were only confirmations of other regulations, are questions which will be mooted in a subsequent chapter.

This much, however, I think has been determined as historically plausible, even if not historically demonstrable.

The most important essay of the Freemasons of Germany as a corporate guild, in the development of their peculiar style of architectural symbolism, was the Cathedral of Cologne. This fabric must then at that time have been the central point of German

<sup>1</sup> "History of Architecture in all Countries," vol. i., p. 2. B. II., chap. viii., p. 477.

<sup>2</sup> Winzer, "German Brotherhoods of the Middle Ages," quoted by Findel, "History,"

mediæval Masonry. Nineteen years afterward the Cathedral of Strasburg was begun. Then it is probable that the jurisdiction was divided and both Cologne and Strasburg became the separate centers in Lower and in Upper Germany whence other *bauhütten*, guilds or lodges emanated.

In time, however, probably from the suspension of the labors on the Cologne Cathedral in 1509, that Cathedral was shorn of its importance as a Masonic head,<sup>1</sup> and the power and jurisdiction of the Fraternity was concentrated in the *Haupt-Hütte* or Grand Lodge of Strasburg, which in 1549 modified the old regulations and preserved them in the form of a written Constitution which has been handed down to the present day.

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<sup>1</sup> This decadence of Cologne as a Masonic power affords another argument against the genuineness of the Charter said to have been issued in 1535.

## CHAPTER XX

### CUSTOMS OF THE GERMAN STONEMASONS



**W**HATEVER knowledge we can obtain from existing documents of the customs and regulations of the Stonemasons who wrought at the building of Cathedrals and other religious edifices in Germany during the Middle Ages, will be so much in the way of enabling us to understand the theory which derives the present institution of Speculative Masons from the Operative Masons of that period.

The two most frequently cited authorities among the German writers on the subject of these customs of the Middle Ages are Fallon in his *Mysteries of the Freemasons as well as their only true Foundation and Origin*,<sup>1</sup> and Winzer in his work entitled *The German Brotherhood of the Middle Ages*.<sup>2</sup>

These works contain much interesting matter, and the general conclusion to which the authors have arrived, as to the origin of the institution, are in accordance with the opinions already expressed in this work. But like some of our older English writers on the history of Freemasonry, Fallon especially has indulged in some speculations which are by no means calculated to increase our respect for his accuracy as an historian. Both these authors have, however, been freely and favorably cited by Findel, who is himself conservative and but little inclined to take any theory on trust.

The theory advanced by Fallon and Winzer is that the German Stonemasons were fraternities in possession of secrets which related to the craft or mystery which they exercised. They have sought to prove that the Freemasons of the present day have derived the ritual which they practice from the mediæval Stonecutters, a point which I do not think that they have successfully maintained in its

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<sup>1</sup> "Die Mystereien der Freimaurer, sowie ihr einzig wahrer Grund und Ursprung," Leipsic, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> "Die Deutschen Bruderschaften des Mittelalters," Giessen, 1859.

full extent. There is, however, undoubtedly evidence that certain words and signs have been handed down, but slightly changed, if changed at all, in their transmission, to the Freemasons of this day.

Another point advanced by these authors is that the German Stonecutters borrowed their customs and laws partly from other corporations contemporary with them, and partly from the regulations of the monastic order, which becomes a very plausible theory when we remember the close connection which originally existed between the monks and the architects.

Their last proposition is that the English Stonemasons received their mysteries from the German *Steinmetzen*, a proposition which is, I think, only partly true, as the English Masons undoubtedly were reinforced from time to time by the accession of Continental workmen who came from Italy and France as well as from Germany.

I have always believed that the earliest of the old English Constitutions, that, namely, known as the Halliwell MS., is a translation from a German original, and is a pregnant proof of the introduction in the 14th century of German Stonemasonry into England.

A most invaluable aid to the scholar engaged in researches into the character of the mediæval Stonemasons, is the work of George Kloss, entitled *Freemasonry in its real meaning as shown by ancient and genuine records of the Stonecutters, Masons and Freemasons*.<sup>1</sup>

In this work we will find details of all the known laws and written Constitutions of the mediæval Stonemasons of Germany and England chronologically arranged and so collated as to show the progress of the gradual transition from the Operative to the Speculative institution.

Kloss, as the result of his labors, comes to the conclusion that the Freemasonry of the present day is a transition from the Stonemasonry of the Middle Ages, and that no distinction can be maintained between the old Operative and the recent Speculative system, the old laws, usages, and charges being the same with but slight, if any, modern alteration.

<sup>1</sup> "Die Freimaurei in ihrer wahren Bedeutung aus den alten und ächten Urkunden der Steinmetzen, Masonen und Freimaurer, nachgewiesen," Leipsic, 1845.

With some reservations, this hypothesis may perhaps be accepted in its second clause, and unreservedly in its first.

But the great value of the work of Kloss consists in the mediæval German Constitutions which it contains and from which and from some other sources we may derive a competent knowledge of the usages of the German Stonemasons of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, which is the subject of the present chapter.

The two oldest Constitutions extant of the German Stonemasons are those enacted at Strasburg, in 1459, and those enacted at Torgau, in 1462.

The ancient laws of the brotherhood were first given a permanent form in the code adopted at Ratisbon on Easter day, in the year 1459, by the Masters and Fellows there assembled in the manner of a Chapter.<sup>1</sup> This code of regulations was soon after ratified at Strasburg and then promulgated as the "Ordinances of the Stonecutters of Strasburg." Heldmann published them in the year 1819 in his book entitled *The three most ancient historical Memorials of the German Freemasons' Brotherhood*.<sup>2</sup> They were subsequently published by other writers, but to Heldmann must be attributed the honor of first giving this important document to the public.

Heldmann tells the story of how it came into his possession. All, he says, who have written of the Cathedral of Strasburg speak of the old statutes of the Grand Lodge there, without imparting them to their readers, or, indeed, being able to do so, since they have always been carefully preserved under a triple custody. While passing through Strasburg in the year 1817, he took extraordinary pains to get possession of a copy of these statutes, but in vain. But he afterward obtained a copy of the Statutes of 1459 from an architect, who had caused it to be made during an accidental residence at Strasburg in the beginning of the revolution, and also got possession, through another architect, of a copy of the revised code of 1563. Bro. Osterneth, who was a member of the Grand Lodge of Strasburg, and who had in his possession a copy of the Statutes of

<sup>1</sup> Kapitelsweise is an expression borrowed, says Findel, from the Benedictine monks, whose convent meetings were called "capitula." But the word and the thing were common to all the Monastic Orders. See Forbrooke, "Brit. Monachism," ii., 133.

<sup>2</sup> "Die drei ältesten geschichtlichen Denkmale der Deutschen Freimaurerbruderschaft," Arau, 1819.

1459, collated it with Heldmann's exemplar and authenticated the latter.

It appears, therefore, that the Statutes of 1459, as published by Heldmann in 1819, have the mark of genuineness and may be accepted as a faithful exposition of the usages of the Craft at the time of their adoption.

The Constitutions of Torgau are the next authentic document in the history of the German Fraternity of the 15th century. Torgau is a town in the Prussian province of Saxony, and has an historical reputation as being the place where the Lutherans and the Elector Frederick concluded a league. The Stonemasons, whose seat was there, had accepted the Statutes of Strasburg when first promulgated, but three years afterward thought it necessary to modify them to some extent, and therefore drew up, in 1462, a code of 112 articles, which are known as the "Constitutions of Torgau."

A duplicate of these Constitutions was deposited in the Stonemasons' lodge, or *Hütte*, at Rochlitz, in 1486. Steiglitz published, in 1829, a copy of these Constitutions in a work written by him *On the church of St. Kunigund at Rochlitz, and on the Stonemasons' lodge at the same place.*<sup>1</sup>

These two Constitutions, those of Strasburg and Torgau, are the only authentic statutes of the Stonemasons which are known, and from them only can we derive any reliable information on the subject of the usages of the Craft at that period.

We learn in the first place from these Constitutions that there were in former times unwritten regulations by which the whole Craft had been governed; that these regulations had been much neglected, in consequence of which dissensions and differences had arisen among the workmen, which evils it was the object of these Constitutions to avoid in future by the adoption of statutes for the government of those who should unite in the establishment of a fraternity.

In Germany, therefore, as we have seen, in England, in France, and in other countries, the work of building was carried on by two distinct classes of workmen; one class who were not associated in

<sup>1</sup> "Ueber die Kirche der heiligen kunigunde zu Rochlitz und die Steinmetzhütte daselbst."

a guild, corporation, or society ; and another class who, by these Constitutions, had formed themselves into a brotherhood.

In the English Constitutions this distinction of classes is very forcibly expressed, and the Freemason who is a member of the Guild is forbidden to hold any communication with the layer, rough mason, or Cowan, all of which names are used to designate a Stonemason who has not been admitted into the Fraternity.

The German Statutes also show this distinction very clearly. "No craftsman or Master," say the Constitutions of Strasburg, "who does not go to the holy sacrament shall be received into the fraternity," and in repeated places they speak of "Masters and Craftsmen who are of the fraternity," which, of course, involves the contrary proposition, namely, that there were Masters and Craftsmen who were not of the fraternity.

What were the peculiar ceremonies which accompanied the reception into the fraternity, or whether there were any such ceremonies or not, are questions that can never be settled in such a satisfactory way as we should desire all historical problems to be solved.

That there were some ceremonies it is natural to suppose ; these *Steinmetzen* had architectural secrets at least, and admission into all secret societies is attended by some form of initiation.

Fallon asserts that it was imitated from the rite of consecration practiced by the Order of Benedictine monks. But we need authority to sustain the assertion.

Findel, in his *History of Freemasonry*, gives a very detailed account of the mediæval initiation into German Freemasonry. I shall make use of his account of the ceremonies used on that occasion, without admitting that I am satisfied as to the correctness of every detail.

The Fellow Craft, as we style him, the *Gesell* of the Germans, before he could be admitted into the fraternity was required to prove that he was born in wedlock, of respectable parents, and that he himself bore a good reputation, with due mental and physical capacity. He was then presented with his mark, which thenceforward he had to cut into every stone on which he was engaged.

I give the account of the succeeding ceremonies in the words of Findel, as translated by Lyon.

"On the day fixed the candidate went into the house where the assemblies were held, where the Master in the Chair had everything



prepared in due order in the Hall of the Craft; the Brethren were then summoned, of course bearing no weapons of any kind, it being a place dedicated to peace, and the Assembly was opened by the Master, who first acquainted them with the proposed inauguration of the candidate, dispatching a brother to prepare him. The messenger, in imitation of an ancient heathen custom, suggested to his companion that he should assume the demeanor of a suppliant; he was then stripped of all weapons and every thing of metal taken from him; he was divested of half his garments, and with his eyes bound and breast and left foot bare, he stood at the door of the hall, which was opened to him after three distinct knocks. The Junior Warden conducted him to the Master, who made him kneel and repeat a prayer. The candidate was then led three times round the hall of the Guild, halting at last at the door and putting his feet together in the form of a right angle, that he might in three upright steps place himself in front of the Master. Between the two, lying open on the table, was a New Testament, a pair of Compasses, and a Mason's square, over which, in pursuance of an ancient custom, he stretched out his right hand, swearing to be faithful to the duties to which he pledged himself, and to keep secret whatever had been or might be thereafter made known to him in that place. The bandage was then removed from his eyes, the three Great Lights were shown him, a new apron bound round him, the password given him, and his place in the hall of the Guild pointed out to him. The manner of knocking and gripe of the hand were and are the same as those now used by the Apprentices in Freemasonry. After the Master had inquired if any one had anything else to submit to the decision of the Assembly, he closed the proceedings with the usual knocks of the Stonemason's hammer.

"At the banquet which invariably succeeded the reception of the candidate, which feasts were always opened and closed with prayer, the chief Master proposed to drink the health of the newly accepted Brother in the drinking-cup of the Brotherhood called *Willkommen*, to which the Brother replied by drinking to the welfare of the whole Fraternity. At that time, as now, and in all other Guilds, healths were drunk with three times three; the cup was taken hold of with a glove or pocket-handkerchief, the cover lifted off, and lastly it was carried to the lips; the cup was emptied in three separate draughts and replaced on the table in three separate motions."

The minuteness with which these details are given makes them very interesting, but at the same time it makes them very suspicious, and we require to relieve our doubts with the full authentication of the fact, by contemporary documents which shall be just as full and complete in the detail, and this is a want that has not been supplied.

Some points, however, in this described initiation, are supported by satisfactory evidence, beside which we are enabled to draw legitimate conclusions from contemporary authority or relevant and connected circumstances which satisfactorily support and confirm other points.

Thus, that the mediæval Masons, at least from the middle of the 15th century were a secret society, that is to say, an association of craftsmen, who were in possession of certain secrets that were imparted only to those who were members of the fraternity, and were withheld from all other persons, though they might be of the same craft, but who had not been made free of the fraternity or guild, is a fact that is duly substantiated by the ordinances, statutes, or constitutions, French, English, and German of that period.

Thus in the French regulations of Stephen Boileau it is said that Masons may employ as many assistants and servants as they please provided they do not show them any point of their trade.

The Statutes of Strasburg forbid any workman to instruct any one in any part if he be not of the craft.

And the English Charges impress upon the Mason to keep secret the counsels "of Lodge and Chamber and all other Counsels that ought to be kept by way of Masonhood."

Now the fact that there were secrets to be kept by the association, necessarily required that there should be some safeguard imposed upon the members, by which they should be reminded of the importance and necessity of preserving their exclusiveness and their identity as a secret society.

But there could not possibly be a better method of securing such a safeguard than to impart to the admission of each member into the fraternity a deeply impressive character derived from the solemnity of a formal initiation.

That method has been adopted in all ages and in all countries, and the ancient formula: "Depart, ye Profane," has been pronounced whenever secrets, however valueless, were to be communicated to an aspirant.

It may, therefore, be accepted as an undoubted fact, substantiated by direct allusions in the old Statutes that the mediæval fraternity of Stonemasons or stonecutters was in Germany, as well as in every other country where they had penetrated, a secret society..

What these secrets were, presents an enterprising inquiry, but which must, however, be deferred to a future chapter.

That this initiation was accompanied by an oath or obligation of secrecy is not only a natural conclusion which we are authorized to deduce from the lessons of experience but is a fact thoroughly substantiated by the old statutes and regulations.

Thus in most of the English charges we have this sentence, curiously enough put in Latin, as if the administration of this ceremony was to be concealed under the veil of a dead language. "Then one of the elders shall hold the book so that he or they (the candidate or candidates) shall place his or their hands on the book, and then the charges should be read."<sup>1</sup>

In the *Steinmetzen Ordinances* of 1462 it is provided that when the *Parlirer*, or Warden, is inducted into office he takes an oath to the Saints. But it is very worthy of remark that this oath was not taken as in modern times on the square and compasses, but on the gauge and square.<sup>2</sup> This would impugn the correctness of the description given by Findel that on the table was a New Testament, and on it a square and compass. The gauge and square seem to have been the mediæval symbols which accompanied the book in the solemnity of the obligation.

There is no evidence of the existence in the *Bauhütten*, or lodges, of such a system of government as is found in the lodges of the Modern Freemasons, where as an invariable rule there are a Master and two Wardens.

But the regulations of Strasburg and Torgau describe an officer between the Master of the work and the Fellows or workmen who was called the *Parlirer*.<sup>3</sup>

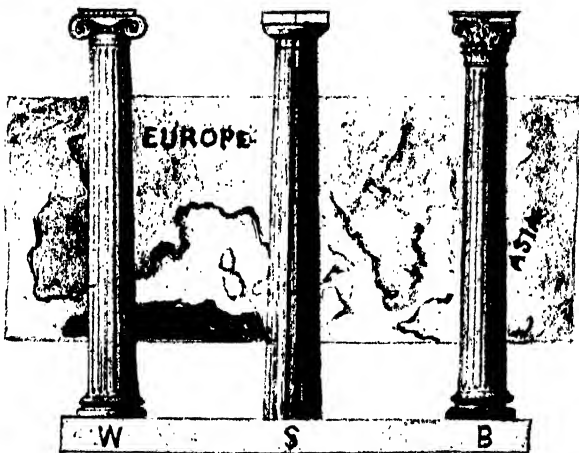
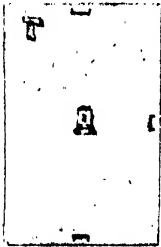
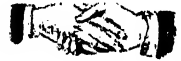
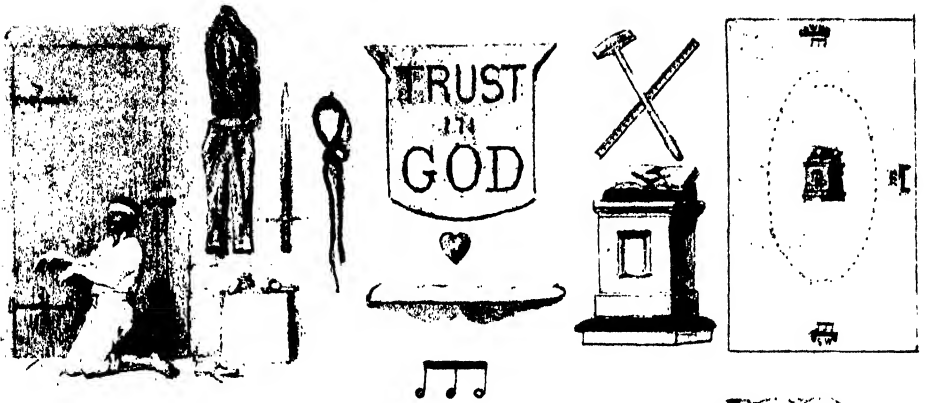
<sup>1</sup> Tunc unus ex senioribus teneat librum ut ille vel illi potiat vel potiant manus super librum et tunc ex precepta deberent legi. "York MS., No. 1." We have the same passage in other manuscripts, but the Latin is no better.

<sup>2</sup> Die eide strebe mit Maszstable und Winkelmas zu den Heyligen, die gebende und dess Meisters Schaden zu bewaren. Ord., 1462, No. 18.

<sup>3</sup> The duties of a Parlirer are elaborately explained on the authority of the Constitutions, by Kloss in his "Freimaurerei in ihrer wahren Bedeutung."









From these regulations it is very evident that the *Parlirer* performed many of the duties which we are accustomed to attribute in English Masonry to the Warden, and which have been figuratively commemorated in the symbolic duties of the Warden of a lodge of Speculative Masons.

Thus the *Parlirer* was to be present in the morning at the opening, and in the evening at the closing of the lodge, and he was with the craft at their noontide meal.

The *Parlirer* paid the craftsmen their wages, which was generally done at sunset of each day.

He is also supposed to have performed the duties of Secretary and Treasurer, that is to say he kept the roll of the members and had charge of the finances of the lodge.

The *Parlirer* was appointed by the Master, but in the appointment he was restricted by certain regulations. Thus the Strasburg Constitutions provide that no Master shall promote one of his apprentices to the office of *Parlirer* who is still in his years of apprenticeship. A similar rule is found in the English charge which says that "no Brother can be a Warden until he has passed the part of a Fellow Craft."

Being thus invested with such important functions it may be supposed that the *Parlirer* was inducted into office with impressive ceremonies. We know that his installation was sanctioned by the administration of a solemn oath on the Gospels and on the twenty-four-inch gauge and the square.

In the Stonecutters' *Bauhütten* of Germany, as in the modern Speculative lodges, the office of Master was one of paramount importance.

All the Fellows or journeymen who were employed in the construction of the same building constituted a single lodge and were under the government of the same Master. The Strasburg Constitutions are very express on this point and leave no doubt of the fact. "Two Masters shall not share in the same work or building."<sup>1</sup> An exception is made in the case of a small building which can be finished in the space of a year. In such a work two Masters might engage.

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<sup>1</sup> Es sollent auch nit zevey Meister ein Werk oder einen Gebaue geme in mit einander haben. "Ordnungen der Strassburger Haupthütte," art. 9.



The Master was enjoined to keep his lodge free from all discord and to administer justice in it between the Fellows. For this purpose he was invested with absolute power to rule his lodge, provided only that he governed it according to the ancient usages of the Craft, and did not arbitrarily oppress the brethren.

In every district there was a lodge over which a Master presided, and over all these there was a still higher officer, to whom appeals might be made, where there was complaint of injustice or wrong.

These were the Masters who presided over the work—the *Magistri Operis*,<sup>1</sup> Master of the Work, called in the German Constitutions, the *Werkmeister*. One of these heard both parties and appointed a day when the trial should take place, which was always in the place where the offense had been committed and before the nearest Master who kept the Statutes.<sup>2</sup>

After an Apprentice had been promoted to the rank of Fellow, he was required, or permitted, to travel throughout Germany and to visit the most important towns and cities. The years employed in this pilgrimage were called his *Wanderjahre*—his years of travel.

During his travels the Fellowcraft was always received with kindness and treated with hospitality by every lodge which he visited. A formula of salutation and reception was prescribed by which, with certain signs of recognition and passwords, the stranger could make himself known to his brethren and secure a welcome.

When a traveling Fellow visited a lodge for the first time, in some town where he had arrived, he knocked three times distinctly, and on being admitted approached the Master, or in his absence the *Parlirer*, with three regular steps, all the brethren standing around.

The salutations of the traveling craftsman were such phrases as these: "God guide you," or "God reward you, Master, *Parlirer*, and all good Companions." The Master or *Parlirer* having returned thanks, the Fellowcraft was submitted to an examination,<sup>3</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> This title of "Magister Operis," or Master of the Work, came to the Stonemasons from the monks, and is a relic of the original ecclesiastical control of architecture. Dugange (Glossarium) says that it was "officium monasticum"—a monastic office, exercised by one who had the charge of public work. In the Masonic usage of the Middle Ages, it was synonymous with the architect or Chief Builder of an edifice.

<sup>2</sup> "Statutes of Strasburg," article 17.

<sup>3</sup> The examination given in the Constitutions-Buch of the lodge Archimedes and which will be found in Krause, Fallon, Findel and other German writers, does not, I think, bear internal evidence of a date so early as the 13th or even the 14th century.

proving satisfactory he received such assistance as he needed, either in work, or if work could not, then and there, be obtained, in money sufficient to supply his immediate wants and to send him on to the next lodge.

The regulations that relate to Apprentices are very explicit in the Strasburg Constitutions, much more so indeed than those of the English or Scottish Masons.

In the first place, no bastard could be accepted as an Apprentice, and the Master is directed to inquire earnestly whether the parents were duly united in lawful wedlock.

An Apprentice could not be made a *Parlirer*. On the same principle the English Statutes required a Warden to have passed the grade of Fellowcraft.

Apprentices, after they had served their years of apprenticeship, were required to travel for at least one year.

If one had served with a *Maurer*, that is to say with a common Mason who was not of the guild, and desired to learn still more of his profession of a Freemason he was required to serve three years as an Apprentice.

The term of apprenticeship was not to be less than five years.

An Apprentice who left his Master without sufficient reason, before serving out his full term of service, was put under the ban. No other Master was to receive him nor was any fellow to work with him, until he had returned and completed his time, giving satisfaction to his Master.

An Apprentice wishing to marry must obtain the consent of his Master.

Apprentices do not appear to have met with the same consideration in the German regulations as they did in the English and in the Scottish, where they are spoken of as constituting a part of the great body of the Craft, and seem to have been intrusted with many of the mysteries of the trade, since they are warned not to divulge them.

An Apprentice who believed that he had not been justly dealt with might appeal for redress to the Masters and Fellows of the district in which his lodge was situated.

But no one can correctly understand the usages and customs of the mediæval Masons of Germany unless he has made himself acquainted with the Statutes enacted by the Assembly held in 1459 at

Strasburg and modified by statutes subsequently enacted at other places and by various confirmations of the German Emperors.

Of all these laws, the Constitutions of Strasburg are the foundation, as they were the earliest written Constitutions. Like the old English Charges they were probably, for the most part, the committal to writing of usages which had prevailed long before. Their similarity to the English Constitutions, to the Scottish Statutes and to the French Regulations, prove, very conclusively, that all these laws were at one time peculiar to a Fraternity of Builders who existed at a much earlier period and from whom the Guilds or Corporations of Freemasons in all these various countries sprang as from a common stock.

As the reader has already been put in possession of the English, Scottish, and French Constitutions, it is proper, for a thorough comprehension of the subject of the connection existing between all these bodies of Freemasons that he should be able to compare those laws with those which prevailed among the German *Steinmetzen*.

I devote therefore the next chapter to a translation of the Constitutions of Strasburg, appending such marginal remarks as may be necessary for their elucidation.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE SECRETS OF THE MEDIÆVAL MASONS



**T**HAT the Stonemasons of the Middle Ages had in their possession certain very important secrets, which they religiously abstained from communicating to any other Masons who were not of the fraternity, is a fact of which there cannot be a doubt. But to discover what these secrets were is a task that has puzzled the brains of more than one investigator.

We have seen that there were passwords, signs, and other methods of recognition which were established to enable the members of the Craft to make themselves known in strange places and to strange brethren, and which were simply matters of convenience forming the part of a system not peculiar to the Masons, but which has, in all ages, been practiced by every association of men who desired to preserve an exclusive organization.

But these modes of recognition did not constitute the secrets of the Freemasons, which bound them together as a united sodality having in every country the same aims and objects. Such secrets were of far more value and importance than any arbitrary code of signals adopted as a means of communication and mutual recognition.

The evidence is very patent, in all the old Constitutions and Regulations, that the Freemasons were in possession of secrets which the members of the fraternity were strictly forbidden to communicate to outsiders. Thus the Strasburg Constitution forbid any Master or Fellow Craft to instruct anyone who is not of the Craft in any part belonging to Masonry.

There was in the lodge a certain book which was kept by the Master under an oath that he would permit no part of it to be copied. It is evident that this book must have contained something besides the Statutes, because a book of mere regulations would hardly have been invested with such a character of sanctity.

But the earliest of the English Constitutions, that known as the Halliwell MS., is still more explicit on this subject. The third point — *tercius peonctus* — is an admonition to Apprentices to keep the secrets of the Craft which have been entrusted to them. He was to keep close the counsel of his Master and his Fellows; he was to reveal to no man matters which had been privately discussed (the prevystye of the chamber), nor what had been done in the lodge.

“The thrydde poynt most be severele,  
 With the prentes knowe hyt wele.  
 Hys Mayster counsel he kepe and close  
 And hys felows by hys goode purpose;  
 The prevystye of the chamber tell he no man,  
 Ny yn the logge whatsoever they done;  
 Whatsever thou heryst or syste hem do,  
 Telle hyt no mon, whersever thou go;  
 The counsel of halle and yeke of boure,  
 Kepe hyt wel to gret honoure  
 Lest hyt wolde torne thyself to blame,  
 And brynge the craft ynto gret shame.”<sup>1</sup>

It seems scarcely capable of a doubt that these secrets were of an architectural nature. The architects and builders who invented the Gothic style of architecture, and built all the religious edifices of the Middle Ages, and who, as Mr. Hope says, whatever might be the locality in which they were placed, either north, south, east, or west, derived their science from a central school, must have been in possession of certain principles of their art, which they kept exclusively to themselves. From the most distant points whither these “Traveling Freemasons” might have wandered, they maintained, with their brethren of the Craft, a constant correspondence, and communicated to each other the minutest improvement in their art.<sup>2</sup>

It was in the 10th century that the science of geometry is supposed to have first given its aid to architecture by the learned Gerbert, who from the archbishopric of Ravenna had been advanced, in

<sup>1</sup>“Halliwell MS.,” t. 275-286.

<sup>2</sup>Hope, “Historical Essay on Architecture,” p. 238. The whole object of this part of Mr. Hope’s work is to show that the Masons who issued from Lombardy and spread over Europe after the 10th century were in possession of rules of construction which constituted the secrets of the great Fraternity which they formed.

the year 999, to the papacy, under the name of Sylvester II. Mosheim says of him that his genius was extensive and sublime, embracing all the branches of literature, but more particularly mathematics. His studies in geometry were so far beyond the attainments of the age in which he lived that his geometrical figures were regarded by the monks as magical operations, and he himself considered as a magician and a disciple of Satan.

To him Europe is said to have been indebted for the introduction of the Arabic numerals, which he brought from Cordova, in Spain, where he spent several years in acquiring the language and the learning of the Arabians.

I am not ready to subscribe to the opinion of some writers who suppose that the builders of the 10th century were placed in possession of the method of applying geometric science to the secrets of architecture. But I think it highly probable that by his learning as a mathematician he gave the first impetus to the study of geometry by the monkish and the lay architects of his times. This led to the application of the principles of that science at a little later period to the art of building, so as to develop into the system of geometrical secrets, which distinguished the builders of the Gothic style, or the Freemasons of the Middle Ages.

Lord Lindsay, in his *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*, significantly alludes to this possession of architectural secrets as an important element in the strength of these mediæval Masons. His language is well worth quotation.

Speaking of the symbolic style of architecture—an architecture in which everything was made subservient to the expression of religious ideas by means of symbolism, which, beginning in Lombardy, had been diffused over all Europe, both north and south of the Alps—Lord Lindsay assigns the following as the cause of that diffusion:

“What chiefly contributed to its diffusion over Europe, was the exclusive monopoly in Christian architecture, conceded by the Popes toward the close of the 8th century, to the Masons of Como, then, and for ages afterward, when the title of *Magistri Comacini* had long been absorbed in that of ‘Free and Accepted Masons,’ associated as a craft or brotherhood in art and friendship. A distinct and powerful body, composed eventually of all nations, concentrating the talent of each successive generation, with all the advantages of accumulated experience and constant mutual communication—im-

bued, moreover, in that age of faith, with the deepest Christian reverence, and retaining their advantages unchallenged till their proscription in the 15th and 16th centuries—we cannot wonder that the Freemasons should have carried their art to a pitch, which now that their secrets are lost, it may be considered hopeless to attempt to rival.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Paley, in his *Manual of Gothic Architecture*, touches rather tenderly on this subject, for he thinks that little or nothing has ever transpired of the secret system which the Freemasons adopted in building, nor of the organization of their body, except that it was ecclesiastical and under the jurisdiction and benediction of the Pope. He supposes, however, that there was some central school whence emanated all the rules which were developed in a positive identity of architectural details in the minutest points; or if there were no such school, that the Master Masons went about like missionaries teaching these principles.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere, in the same work, he becomes more explicit in respect to these secrets, and thinks that they consisted in an application of the principles of geometry to architecture. It is, he says, certain that geometry lent its aid in the planning and designing of buildings, and the methods of application were, he thinks, evidently “profound secrets in the keeping of the Freemasons.”<sup>3</sup>

He expatiates on this theory and supposes that the equilateral triangle was probably the basis of most formations, as it is exhibited in a majority of pointed arches as well as in the *vesica piscis*, a prominent mystic symbol of the mediæval Masons.

And this theory is greatly strengthened by the fact—which was probably not known to Mr. Paley, or at least he does not refer to it—that the equilateral triangle is one of the most important and significant of the symbols of the Speculative Masons, who indeed have founded most of their symbolism on geometrical principles borrowed from or suggested by the practices of the mediæval Operative Masons, who were their predecessors.

Michelet, in his *History of France*,<sup>4</sup> has some very profound re-

<sup>1</sup> “Sketches of the History of Christian Art,” ii., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> “Manual of Gothic Architecture,” chap. vi., p. 210.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. iii., p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> “Histoire de France,” par M. Michelet. Bruxelles, 1840. The same views had been previously announced by Boisserée in his description of the Cathedral of Cologne, and Michelet acknowledges his indebtedness to that writer.

marks on this subject of the secret of the mediæval Masons. He shows that it was geometrical and consisted in an application of the science of numbers, used in a mystical sense to the art of building according to the principles of Gothic architecture, which was the peculiar style of the Freemasons.

He illustrates this view from examples furnished by cathedrals built by the fraternity from the 11th century onward. His views are worth consideration.

He says that this geometry of beauty, as he calls it, is conspicuous in the type of Gothic architecture as exhibited in the Cathedral of Cologne. This is a regular body which has grown in its appropriate proportions with a regularity equal to that of the formation of crystals. The cross of this church is strictly deduced from the figure by which Euclid constructs the equilateral triangle. The numbers 10 and 12, with their divisors and their multiples, were the numbers which guided and controlled all the measures of the edifice.

Of these, 10 was the human number, because it was that of the fingers; 12 was the divine number, being astronomical in its relations. To these 7 were added as the number of the planets. The inferior parts of the building are modeled on the square, and subdivided into the octagon; the superior are modeled on the triangle and are developed in the hexagon and the lodecagon.

The arcade, thrown from one pillar to another, is fifty feet wide, and this number is repeated throughout the building in some of its multiples. Thus the side-aisles are 25 feet, or one-half the width of the arcade; the façade is thrice its width, or 150 feet. The entire length of the church is three times its entire breadth, or nine times the width of the arcade. The breadth of the whole church is equal to the length of the choir, of the nave, and to the height of the middle of the roof.

The proportion of the length to the height is as 2 is to 5. Finally, the numbers of the arcade and the side-aisles are repeated externally in the counter-foils and buttresses. There are seven chapels of the choir, which is the number of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of the Sacraments, according to the Catholic Church, and the choir is supported by twice seven columns.

This predilection for mystical numbers occurs in all the churches of the mediæval period. Thus the Cathedral of Rheims has 7



entrances, and both it and the Cathedral of Chartres have 7 chapels around the choir. The choir of Notre Dame, at Paris, has 7 arcades. The cross-aisle is 144 feet long, which is 16 times 9, and 42 feet wide, which is 6 times 7. The towers of Notre Dame are 204 feet high, which is 17 times 12, the astronomical number. The length of the church of Notre Dame at Rheims is 408 feet, or 34 times 12. The Cathedral of Notre Dame has 297 columns; but 297 divided by 3 gives 99, and this divided by 3 again produces 33. The naves of St. Ouen, at Rouen, and of the Cathedrals of Strasburg and Chartres, are of the same length, or 244 feet. The Saint Chapelle, at Paris, is 110 feet long and 27 feet wide, but 110 is 10 times 11, and 27 is 3 times 9.

In these few examples we have developed the numbers 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12, all of which have been retained in the mystical system of the Speculative Freemasons, and their appearance among the mediæval Masons could have been neither by an accident nor a coincidence, but must have arisen from a predetermined selection.

"To whom, then," says Michelet, "belonged this science of numbers, this divine mathematics? To no mortal man, but to the Church of God." Under the shadow of the Church, in chapters and in monasteries, the secret was transmitted together with instruction in the mysteries of Christianity. The Church alone could accomplish these miracles of architecture. She would often summon a whole people to complete a monument. A hundred thousand men labored at once on that of Strasburg, and such was their zeal that they did not suffer night to interrupt their labors, but continued them by the light of torches. The Church would often expend centuries on the slow accomplishment of a perfect work. Renaud de Montauban, for instance, bore stones for the building of the Cathedral of Cologne, and to this day it is still in process of erection.<sup>1</sup>

Michelet has found, in the geometrical proportions observed in the construction of religious edifices, a conformity to the principles of art laid down by Vitruvius and by Pliny, and thus in the Gothic style of architecture the Freemasons have preserved the traditions of antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Here, then, we see apparently another link in the chain which connects the Middle Age Corporations of Craftsmen with the Roman builders of the *Collegia Artificum*.

<sup>1</sup> "Histoire de France," liv. iv., chap. ix., p. 369. (The Cathedral of Cologne has since been completed.)

<sup>2</sup> Ut supra.

In defining the secret or secrets of the mediæval Masons to have consisted in an application of the principles of geometry to the processes of building, M. Michelet has taken that view of the subject which is now very generally accepted by Masonic and archæological writers.

Findel says that the secrets of the Stonemasons consisted of instruction in architecture and in mystical numbers; of these he says that 3, 5, 7 and 9 were especially sacred. But Michelet has shown that while the numbers mentioned by Findel were venerated, the numbers 10 and 12, or the human and divine numbers, were deemed the most important, and were the most used in symbolization. He says, also, that the colors gold or yellow, blue and white, were sacred as having especial allusions to the art.

The symbolization of colors, as well as of the implements of the Craft, which have been described by Findel and some other German writers, did not constitute any part of those secrets of the Craft the knowledge of which distinguished the members of the Guild or Fraternity of Freemasons from the common workmen, to whom these secrets were never communicated, and to whom they never could be imparted except by a positive violation of the Guild law.

It is therefore a matter of but very little importance—in fact of none at all—whether M. Michelet is or is not correct in assigning to the Church the office of inventing the architectural symbolism which pervaded all the religious edifices of the Middle Ages. It is true that the Christian Church had scarcely emerged from the chrysalis state in which it had existed during the apostolic age, when dogmas were taught without figurative illustration, before it began to impress its religious instructions upon its disciples by means of symbols.<sup>1</sup>

But as early as the 12th century, at least, the Freemasons had begun to cut adrift from their monastic and ecclesiastic connections, and had established themselves as an independent body of Craftsmen. It would be safe to suppose, as Boisserée contends, that both geometrical architecture and architectural symbolism were the invention rather of skilled professional architects than of monks or

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<sup>1</sup> This is not the place to discuss the question of how much the Freemasons were indebted to the Church for their symbolism. It will be hereafter treated on a more appropriate occasion.

prelates who were not practical Masons. The Church, however, must have undoubtedly exercised some influence in early times in moulding the system.

At first, in the earliest periods of the rise of ecclesiastical architecture, the abbots and bishops, taking, as Fergusson says, some former building as a model, made their designs and verbally corrected its mistakes or suggested their improvements to the builder.<sup>1</sup>

But afterward the professional architects and Masons usurped to themselves the task of designing as well as erecting the churches and other buildings. The methods of geometrical and mathematical construction became *arcana*, to be confined to the members of the Guild of Freemasons and to constitute those secrets, so often spoken of, which were lost at the dissolution of the fraternity.

The gradual disseverance of the professional Masons from their ecclesiastical relations, and the improvement in the science of architecture which—of course, developed that geometrical system which the wiser craftsmen kept to themselves—has been described by Mr. Whittington in his *Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Antiquities of France*; and though what he says has direct reference to that kingdom, it can, with perfect correctness, be applied to Germany.

The ancient writers often mention instances of an abbot giving a plan which his convent assisted in carrying into execution, and this was certainly the case in the beginning of the revival of learning after the decadence of the Roman Empire, when the arts were almost exclusively cultivated by the clergy.

But it is equally certain that the ecclesiastics patronized the professors of the arts among the laity, and especially in the arts of building there were men of superior skill and intelligence who, being brought from distant places by the liberality of the prelates, were added to the common Masons and carpenters who were found in the different cities, and whose mere manual labor was made use of by the monks in the construction of religious edifices. This association, elevated by the intermixture of the superior intelligence of the more skilled workmen, and patronized by the authority of the Church, secured employment and protection. The members gradually increased in numbers and improved in science until, at length, they produced the most able artificers among themselves.

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<sup>1</sup>“ History of Architecture in all Countries,” i., p. 480.

Thus it was that the builders were, about the 12th century, enabled to withdraw altogether from their dependence on, and from their connection with, the ecclesiastics. They formed that fraternity of Freemasons who were distinguished in every country where they appeared, from the common herd of craftsmen—the *Maurer* of the Germans and the “rough Masons”<sup>1</sup> of the English—by the possession of important secrets connected with the art of building.

“So studiously,” says Mr. Halliwell, “did they conceal their secrets, that it may be fairly questioned whether even some of those who were admitted into the Society of Freemasons were wholly skilled in all the mysterious portions of the art.”<sup>2</sup>

Doubtless in this, as in every association of men, must have been a diversity of skill and talent. But the fraternal spirit of the Craft led to a willingness on the part of the best instructed to supply the needs of their less informed brethren. Thus in one of the earliest of the old English Constitutions it is provided that if a Mason be wiser and more subtile than his fellow working with him in his lodge or any other place, and he perceives that he must leave the stone upon which he is working for want of skill, and he can teach him how to work the stone better, he shall instruct him and help him, that the more love may increase among them, and that the work of the Lord be not lost.<sup>3</sup> A similar regulation will be found in the Constitutions of Strasburg.

Thus, though there were of course some workmen more skilled than others, and though they were strictly exclusive in confining their knowledge of the secrets of their art to their own fraternity, yet those secrets were freely imparted to every member who desired the knowledge.

The theory that the secret of the mediæval Freemasons consisted in an application of the principles of geometry to architecture enables us to explain many things otherwise inexplicable in the old records of the Operative Masons and in the modern rituals of the Speculative Free and Accepted Masons. We are thus enabled to understand all the allusions made to geometry as the most important of the sciences and as the synonym of Masonry. Dr. Anderson, most probably with some old manuscript before him, the suggestions of

<sup>1</sup> Called also “roughlayers.”

<sup>2</sup> “Archæologia,” vol. xxviii., p. 445.

<sup>3</sup> Cooke MS., line 888.

which he followed, commenced the *Book of Constitutions* with a eulogium, not on Masonry, but on Geometry, which he declared was the foundation of Masonry and Architecture.

In the second edition of the *Constitutions* he says that the Masons always had a book in manuscript which, besides the Charges and Regulations, contained the history of architecture, in order to show the antiquity of the Craft or Art, "and how it gradually arose upon its solid foundation, the noble science of Geometry."<sup>1</sup> The discovery since his time of many copies of this manuscript book of *Constitutions* confirms what he here says of the connection of Geometry with Masonry.

Elsewhere he writes in the same strain of Geometry and Masonry as identical arts. Thus he says: "No doubt Adam taught his sons Geometry," and "Seth took equal care to teach Geometry and Masonry to his offspring." But the best illustration in the work of Anderson, of the theory that the secret of the Freemasons consisted in the application of the principles of Geometry to Architecture, is his statement that Noah's ark "was certainly fabricated by Geometry and according to the rules of Architecture."

All the old English manuscript Constitutions maintain the same idea of the very close connection, and, indeed, identity, of Geometry and Masonry.

Thus in the earliest of them, the Halliwell MS., whose date is supposed to be about the year 1390, it is said :

"In that time through good Geometry,  
The honest craft of good Masonry  
Was ordained and made in this manner."

In the Cooke MS., whose date is about a hundred years later, we are told that "Isidore saith in his *Etymologies*, that Euclid calleth the craft geometry." In the York MS., of the date of 1600, we are still more distinctly told that "Euclid was the first that gave it the name of Geometry, the which is now called Masonry."

But it is hardly necessary to multiply the instances in which the

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson's "Constitutions," second edition, 1738, p. vii. Krause says ("Kunsturkunden," i., 23) that Geometry is to be here taken in a double sense: 1, as the foundation of architecture, and, 2, as the social design of the brotherhood of Freemasons. But this appears to be really a "distinction without a difference." Architecture and the design of the Masons are, in the present view of the subject, one and the same thing.

old Constitutions have referred to Geometry as the foundation of Masonry, or as an art indeed identical with it. All of these references to Geometry are but corroborating proofs of what has been already said, that the great secret of the mediæval Masons consisted in the application of the principles of Geometry to the art of building by methods known only to themselves, and which they developed in the Gothic style of architecture which they invented. This secret perished with the dissolution of the Operative Fraternity, or by its transmission into the Speculative Association.

Yet this Speculative Association, the Free and Accepted Masons of the present day, have retained the memory of their descent from these Operative Masons of the Middle Ages by a sacred preservation in their ritual of a reference to Geometry as the "fifth and noblest of the sciences and the one on which the superstructure of Masonry is founded."

The retention in the ritual of the letter G, the earliest and the most extensively propagated of all the symbols of Speculative Masonry, is an ever-present and a loudly speaking testimony in every lodge that the brethren there congregated have not forgotten that the great secret of their predecessors was a geometrical one.

Indeed, if there were no other proof that the mediæval Freemasons did all their work according to certain principles of Geometry, the method of applying which was known only to themselves, and that therefore the science of Geometry was to them a most important and indispensable part of their Craft, and which entitled it peculiarly to the appellation of a "mystery," a word applied indifferently to designate a trade or a secret.<sup>1</sup>

But the very fact that these Freemasons were possessed of important secrets in reference to the art and practice of building, and to preserve their own pre-eminence, it became necessary that they should have some method of securing these secrets to themselves and of preventing the intrusion of strangers and workmen who were not of their guild or fraternity into a community of

<sup>1</sup> There is doubt among philologists whether "Mystery" is derived from the French "mestier," a trade, or from the Latin "mysterium," a secret. The word has always been used in both senses. Thus Chaucer says the reeve had learned "a good mester, he was a well good wright a carpenter" ("Canterbury Tales," Pro. 613), and Wiclif speaks of "the myserie whych was kepte secrete since the worlde beganne." The legal term, at this day, for an art, trade, or occupation is "Mystery."

labor with them and the acquisition of any part of their mystical knowledge.

Now the only method by which these ends could be attained was that of a code or system of signs and words by which any one of these Freemasons could make himself known to the others, when he might be in a strange place, and thus secure to himself a participation in the benefits of the association. A form of reception or initiation would also, probably, be adopted, either for further security or for the purpose of giving solemnity to the admission of new members.

We have the best historical records to prove that modes of recognition were adopted for the purpose named by the mediæval Freemasons, and that they had a form of initiation, though what that form precisely was I am disposed to think we are ignorant of, notwithstanding the authority of recent German writers, some of whom have pretended to give it in full.

The English and Scottish authorities—that is to say, the contemporary manuscript records—certainly supply us with no information on that subject, save that there was some formula of reception for an Apprentice, a Fellow, and a Master, the authorities indicating that the same formula was used on each occasion, or perhaps that one form of reception only was used, and on only one occasion. There is a great amount of obscurity on this subject which can be removed only by future investigations and by the discovery of more explicit manuscripts, which, if any such exist, have not yet been brought to light.

The German writers, however, have furnished from documents in their possession many almost minute details of the usages of the Traveling Freemasons of that country and which in the course of time must have extended into other lands.

In the *Book of Constitutions* of the Lodge Archimedes, at Altenburg, is contained an examination of a German *Steinmetzen*, which has been copied by Krause, by Findel, and by other writers, and which is declared by all of them to be a genuine document. I do not see any reason to doubt its genuineness and I give it as it has been published in Findel's *History of Freemasonry*, with a few alterations or amendments, on the authority of Krause's copy of the same document.

When a Fellow, traveling in his "Wander Year," or at any time

in search of employment, arrived at a strange *Hütte* or Lodge, he approached, says Findel, by three regular steps, and knocking three times was admitted, when, the brethren all standing around, their feet placed at right angles, he saluted the Master, or in his absence, the *Parlirer* or Warden, with the following salutations, which were, "God greet you—God guide you—God reward you—Master, *Parlirer* and Fellows." After some other mutual courteous greetings, the examination proceeded as follows :

Q. Worthy Fellow-craftsmen, are you a letter Mason (*ein Briefer*) or a salute Mason (*ein Grüsser*) ?

A. I am a salute Mason.

Q. How shall I know you to be such ?

A. By my salute and the words of my mouth.

Q. Who has sent you ?

A. My worshipful Master, the worshipful townsmen, and the worshipful Craft of Masons at N.N.

Q. For what purpose ?

A. For honorable advancement, instruction, and honesty.

Q. What are instruction and honesty ?

A. The customs and usages of the Craft.

Q. When do they begin ?

A. As soon as I have honestly and faithfully finished my Apprenticeship.

Q. When do they end ?

A. When death breaks my heart.

Q. How shall we know a Mason ?

A. By his honesty.

Q. What kind of a Mason are you ?

A. A Mouth-mason (*ein Mund-Maurer*).

Q. How shall we know that ?

A. By my salute and mouth speech.

Q. Where was the worshipful Craft of Masonry in Germany instituted ?

A. In Magdeburg, at the Cathedral.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It was a tradition of the German Masons that they were first formed into a brotherhood at the building of the Cathedral of Magdeburg, which was commenced about the year 1211. Bishop Lucy, a few years before, in 1202, created a company of builders for the construction of the Cathedral of Winchester. Hence Findel suggests that they were most probably the founders of the Fraternity of Freemasons in England. We have no positive authority for this, but the coincidence of time is, at least, remarkable.



Q. Under what monarch ?

A. Under the Emperor Charles II., in the year 876.

Q. How long did that Emperor reign ?

A. Three years.

Q. How was the first Mason called ?

A. Anton Hieronymus, and the working tool was invented by Walkan.

Q. How many words has a Mason ?

A. Seven.

Q. What are for the Words ?

A. *Riganische, Riganse, Rigaische.*

Q. How do they run ?

A. God bless honesty.

God bless honorable wisdom.

God bless a worshipful Craft of Masons.

God bless a worshipful Master.

God bless a worshipful *Parlirer* (or warden).

God bless a worshipful Society.

God bless an honorable advancement here and there and everywhere, on the water and on the land.

Q. What is secrecy in itself ?

A. Earth, fire, air, and snow, through which to a Worshipful Master's advancement I go.

Q. What do you carry under your hat ?

A. A praiseworthy wisdom.

Q. What do you carry under your tongue ?

A. A praiseworthy truth.

Q. Why do you wear an apron ?

A. To do honor to the Worshipful Craft and for my profit.

Q. What is the strength of our Craft ?

A. That which fire and water cannot destroy.

Q. What is the best for a Mason ?<sup>1</sup>

A. Water.

Such was according to the *Konstitutions Buch* of the Altenburg

<sup>1</sup> Findel gives this last question and answer thus : " Q. What is the best part of a wall ? A. Union." There is certainly more sense apparently in this than in the formula as I have given it. Yet it is the language of Krause, who quotes the " *Konstitutions Buch*" in his " *Drei Altesten Kunsturkunden*," and it is from him that I have made my translation.

Lodge of "Archimedes of the three Tracing Boards," the catechism or examination of a Freemason in the Middle Ages in Germany.

It is very evident that its only design was to establish a system of questions, the capacity of giving the correct answers to which were to prove the just claim of the person questioned to be a member of the guild. In this respect this catechism resemble sthat which was in use among the English Masons at the time of the organization of Speculative Masonry.

One of the answers in this mediæval catechism presents the doggerel form of verse which is so common in the early English catechisms, and hence we find another resemblance. In the original German catechism we find this answer :

*" Was ist Heimlichkeit an sich selbst ?  
Erde, Feuer, Luft, und Schnee,  
Wodurch ich auf eines Ehrbaren Meisters Beförderung geh."*

Which may be translated :

*" What is Secrecy in itself ?  
Earth, Fire, Air, and Snow,  
Through which to a worshipful Master's advancement I go."*

This must strongly remind us of the doggerel verses in the English catechisms. So common indeed was this practice of doggerel versification in all the old rituals that its presence may be deemed a proof of relative antiquity, as its absence would be a proof of want of genuineness. The long ritual of the Royal Order of Scotland, which is among the oldest of the High Degrees, is made up almost entirely from beginning to end of doggerel verses, which even for doggerel are for the most part very inferior in structure.

The secret words in this catechism are also worthy of remark. Of *Rigantse*, with its variations, it is impossible to trace the origin. The supposition in the Constitution Book that it is a corruption of the English "wriggle," is too puerile for consideration. It is said that the number of the letters being seven is significant, and hence Krause, who admits that this is a mutilated word, thinks the letters may be composed of the initials of the names of the seven liberal arts and sciences. But this hypothesis is, I think, wholly untenable, and it must remain as another instance of the numerous irreparable corruptions of the old Masonic manuscripts.

Not so, however, with the other words in this catechism, *Adon*

*Hieronymus* and *Walkan*. The former, evidently, is a corruption of Adonhiram, who, Krause says, has been confounded with either Hiram, the King of Tyre, or with Hiram Abif ; I think most probably the latter, because the person described by that name in the Books of Kings and Chronicles is called "Adon" in some of the English Constitutions.

The word *Walkan*, evidently, is a corruption of Tubal Cain. Mossdorf thinks it was meant for Vulcan. But this is untenable. Vulcan is never mentioned in any of the old Masonic records, and it is not probable that the Freemasons were at all acquainted with this pagan god of blacksmiths. On the other hand, the old Constitutions had made them familiar with the name of Tubal Cain, whom the *Legend of the Craft* had placed with the other children of Lamech as the founders of Masonry.

We see, therefore, the close connection between the *Steinmetzen* of Germany and the Freemasons of England. They were both, evidently, branches of the same common body of artists, and had, if we may judge from these two words, the same legend.

The Altenburg Constitution Book asserts, indeed, that the forms of initiation and the ritual used by the German Stonemasons came originally from England.

This may have been so, though we have no direct or distinct proof of the fact. If it were so it would not militate with the fact that the other and greater secret of the Craft, that of building in the Gothic style and on geometric principles, came to both England and to Germany from the school of Lombardy and the Masters of Como.

We have thus seen that the Freemasons of the Middle Ages—the *Steinmetzen*, Stonecutters or Stonemasons, as they have been indifferently called, were in possession of and were distinguished by two classes of secrets.

One of these classes consisted in the possession of certain methods of recognition by which one Mason might know another, as the modern rituals say, "in the dark as well as in the light."

Now this class of secrets is not of any historical importance, nor was it peculiar to the fraternity of Masons. At all times and in all countries, men, when they unite into a brotherhood for the pursuit of any special object, certain details of which they desire to conceal from the world, protect their exclusiveness and their secrecy by

some method of signs or pass-words which will secure them from the intrusion of those who are not of their sodality, and are therefore to them as profanes. We have ample proof that those who practiced the Pagan Mysteries of antiquity had this secret method of protecting their ceremonies and the dogmas which they taught from the uninitiated.

"Every trade, art, and occupation," said Harris, "has its secrets, which are not to be indiscriminately communicated to all who seek to obtain them without having undergone the necessary probation, and have not thus become members of the sodality, guild, or craft."

The Freemasons of the Middle Ages did not, therefore, differ in this respect from other associations of a similar kind. Their possession of signs and words, by which they made themselves known to each other, is of no special importance in the history of the Craft, except insomuch as that if there can be shown to be any similarity or analogy between those used by the Freemasons of the present day and those which were practiced by the mediæval Masons, we should have another proof of the descent of the former as a fraternity from the latter.

Such a similarity or analogy has, I think, been already shown in the course of our present investigations. The use among the German Stonemasons of such words as *Walkan* and *Adon Hieronymus*, which are evidently corruptions of "Tubal Cain" and "Adon Hiram" or "Adoniram," together with some similar analogies among the English and the Scotch Stonemasons, render it very probable that the secret methods of recognition which were in use among the Stonemasons or Masonic Corporations of the Middle Ages, have for the most part been preserved, and are to this day employed by their successors, the Speculative Freemasons.

But the real secrets of the mediæval Masons were those whose loss are still deplored, and whose importance is testified to by the fact universally admitted, that from the knowledge of them, and from their practical application, have resulted the magnificent architectural works of the Middle Ages, some of which, as the Cathedrals of Cologne and Strasburg, still remain, while of others, though time-worn and dilapidated, the ruins still attest the skill and the taste (unsurpassed in modern times) of their builders.

These secrets, which were the application of Geometry to the art of building, intimately connect the history of Freemasonry with

the history of Gothic architecture, and thus they acquire an importance far surpassing that of the former class, or the methods of recognition.

The use by the Masons of the Middle Ages of Geometry in the practice of their profession as architects gave rise to geometrical symbols, the preservation of many of which by the Speculative Freemasons of our day is another proof of the succession of the later from the older society, and is in this way again of great historical importance in the history of the institution.

The geometrical symbols which are found in the ritual of modern or Speculative Freemasonry, such as the triangle, the square, the right angle, and the forty-seventh problem, may be considered as the débris of the "lost secrets" of the mediæval Stonemasons. As these founded their operative art on the application to architecture of the principles of Geometry, of which they were wont to say that "there is no handycraft that is wrought by man's hand but it is wrought by Geometry," so the modern Freemasons, imitating them in their reverence for that science (though not possessing the same knowledge of its principles), have drawn from it their most impressive symbols.

Thus we may easily explain the origin and the meaning of the phrase, "Geometrical Masons," which was applied in the beginning of the 18th century to the Speculative Freemasons, who thus claimed to be considered as the successors of the Masonic Guilds of the Middle Ages, who had called themselves Freemasons and whose secrets were of a geometric character.

This claim, too often rejected or laid aside for the sake of seeking a more ancient but wholly mythical origin of Freemasonry, either from the Pagan Mysteries or from the Temple of Solomon, is rapidly gaining ground among the Fraternity.

It is evident that the Speculative Freemasons of the last century sought to strengthen the claim by applying to themselves the title of "Geometrical Masons," by which they intended to distinguish themselves from the Operative Masons of their own time, just as the old Freemasons of the Middle Ages distinguished themselves, by the possession of geometrical secrets, from the "rough layers" or "rough Masons"—workmen who were not entitled to be called, and who were not called, "Freemasons" because they were not freemen of the Guild, were not in possession of those geo-

metrical secrets, and were not therefore admitted into the brotherhood.

There are, however, between the Speculative Masons, who date their organization from the year 1717, and the Freemasons of the Middle Ages some very significant differences and some equally significant resemblances.

The consideration of these differences and of these resemblances will come into view when treating, in another chapter, of the transition of Operative into Speculative Masonry.

## CHAPTER XXII

### GOthic ARCHITECTURE AND THE FREEMASONS



FROM what has been heretofore said, the reader will readily perceive that there was a very close connection between the Freemasons of the Middle Ages and that system of architecture which has been called the Gothic style.

It is not my intention to enter into any elaborate discussion of the character and the origin of that style. Such a discussion would be irrelevant to the design of the present work, which is a history not of architecture but of Freemasonry.

But as it has been, by general consent, admitted that the Gothic style, if not absolutely invented by the mediæval Freemasons, was exclusively cultivated by them as the style of the ecclesiastical buildings which they erected in every country of western Europe, during the period of from four to five centuries or perhaps more, in which they flourished as a well-organized fraternity.

Gothic architecture has, therefore, very justly been called the architecture of the Freemasons.

It has, however, received other names, some of which have less appropriateness, whether we look to the character of the style or to the history of its origin and its progress.

Sir Christopher Wren, indulging in the hypothesis that this style was introduced into Europe by the Crusaders, called it the Saracenic style.

He maintains his theory with great ingenuity, and I shall quote the passage from the *Parentalia*, at the expense of some repetition, because, whatever may be thought of the Saracen origin attributed to the Gothic style, we have the important testimony of this great architect to the guild or corporation character of the Stonemasons of the Middle Ages. We find the following passages in the *Parentalia* :

"The Holy War gave the Christians who had been there an idea of the Saracen works; which were afterward by them imitated in the West; and they refined upon it every day, as they proceeded in building churches. The Italians (among which were some Greek refugees), and with them Frenchmen, Germans, and Flemings, joined into a fraternity of architects; procuring Papal bulls for their encouragement and particular privileges; they styled themselves Freemasons, and ranged from one nation to another, as they found churches to be built."<sup>1</sup>

Britton, an architect of much reputation, rejecting the Saracenic theory of Wren, uses the term "Christian Architecture" in preference to Gothic, as more analogous, more correct, and more historical. He defines this phrase, "Christian Architecture," as one "applied to all the classes of buildings which were invented and erected by the Christians, and which essentially varied from the Pagan architecture of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. It includes all the varieties of designs used in churches and monasteries, from the 6th to the end of the 16th century."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. T. G. Jackson, a professional architect, who has written a very readable little work on *Modern Gothic Architecture*, dissents from this view. He asserts that Gothic architecture was not exclusively connected with the system of the Christian Church, nor intended by its forms to symbolize Christian doctrine.

Gothic architecture is not, he says, the creation of any religious creed or doctrine. It is the offspring of modern European civilization. It is Christian, only because modern Europe is Christian. It is connected with the Church only so far as the Church enters into the composition of our social state as one among many elements.<sup>3</sup>

But a previous admission of the author contradicts the theory which he has here advanced that Gothic architecture was not Christian architecture, except incidentally, and that its forms did not symbolize Christian doctrine.

"It is true," he says, "that this style was at first nurtured in the Church," and he assigns as a reason for this fact that "amid the turmoil and confusion of society during the 11th and 12th centu-

<sup>1</sup> Wren's "Parentalia," p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> Britton, "Dictionary of the Architecture and Archæology of the Middle Ages," in voce.

<sup>3</sup> "Modern Gothic Architecture," by T. G. Jackson, Architect, London, 1873, p. 103.



ries it was only in the kindly shelter of the cloister that learning and the peaceful arts were able to live and grow ; but it did not develop itself into a perfect style, it never shook off the traditions of that classic art from which it was derived, it never merged into an independent, energizing life, till the 13th century, when it passed from the hands of the clergy into those of the laity. Till then, all those great architects were clerks ; since then they have mostly been laymen."<sup>1</sup>

Now this admission is all that the most zealous advocates of the close relation borne by the Freemasons to Gothic architecture could require. It is not denied that in the earlier periods of the revival of art, the monastic institutions and the prelates of the Church, in whose hands were deposited all the seeds of learning, and who were the architects of that period, cultivated, almost as a necessity, the classic style which they borrowed from the Roman artificers.

But neither the Gothic style nor the corporations of Freemasons existed. They both sprung into active life at the same time. Paley, in his classification, traces Gothic architecture in its different styles from the middle of the 12th to the middle of the 16th century.<sup>2</sup> This embraces the very period in which the Freemasons of the Middle Ages present themselves as guilds or a fraternity.

It was then that architecture passed out of its classic form, whether you call that form Roman, Byzantine, Norman or what you please, and assumed that more symbolic form which has received the name of the Gothic.

This style, coming into existence at the very time that the lay builders had emerged from the control of the clergy, and established themselves as an independent body of architects with the organization of a guild and under the name of Freemasons, was, it can not be doubted, from the coincidence of time and circumstances, the invention of that Fraternity.

It may therefore be accepted as an historical fact, capable of demonstration, that the Gothic style of architecture was the invention of the mediæval Freemasons.

And this style, so full of high art, developed in the profoundest symbolism, was that peculiar characteristic of the Freemasons of

<sup>1</sup> "Modern Gothic Architecture," by T. G. Jackson, Architect, London, 1873, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Paley, "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 29.

the Middle Ages, which distinguished them from the artisans of every other trade or profession, and in time when as a body of operatives they were dissolved, enabled them to transmute themselves into a Speculative association founded on the teaching of moral and religious doctrines by architectural and geometrical symbols.

We can not properly or fairly appreciate this mediæval architecture if we confound it with the mere practice of building by laying one stone on another. The Freemasons, justly appreciative of the high aims of their profession, held themselves proudly aloof from the ordinary rough masons, who could do no more than build a wall or construct a house.

"Mediæval architecture," says Paley, "was the visible embodying of the highest feelings of adoration and worship, and holy abstraction; the expression of a sense which must have a language of its own and which could have utterance in no worthier or more significant way."<sup>1</sup>

So these Freemasons became the preservers and the teachers of the doctrines of their religious faith, and gave a moral in every sculptured form. Among their works, the moralizing Jacques might have well said that he could find "sermons in stones."

The Freemasons of the Middle Ages, coming originally from Lombardy and extending over Europe in the 12th and succeeding centuries, thus applied to their works the taste and skill and spirit of symbolism which they had originally learned from their Masters on the borders of the Lake of Como. Congregating in the *bauhütten*, the hut or lodge which they had erected near the building about to be constructed by their skill, they devised the plans for the future edifice, which in almost every instance was one intended for religious purposes, for to nothing secular or profane would they devote their art.

Hence arose the monasteries, the churches, and cathedrals, which although now for the most part in ruins, present, even in wreck, such wonderful evidence of architectural beauty as to excite the admiration of every spectator, as well as the envy of modern artists, who have sought in vain to rival or even to imitate these old builders.

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<sup>1</sup> "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 5.

Speaking of them as the inventors of the system of architectural symbolism, Lord Lindsay calls the humble lodges in which they held their consultations and produced their designs, "parliaments of genius."<sup>1</sup>

They were possessed of wondrous skill in art, and were actuated purely by elevated religious thought. Yet have they passed away unknown save as component parts of that vast association which had spread over all civilized countries, and who labored at the great works in which they were engaged with a noble abnegation of self. Of the wholly disinterested zeal with which they worked, Michelet cites one striking proof. "Ascend," he says, "to the top-most points of those aerial spires which they were constructing, to heights which only the slater mounts with fear and trembling, and you will often find some masterpiece of sculpture, on which the pious workman had perhaps consumed his life, without the remotest expectation that the eye of man would ever behold its delicate, artistic tracing. On it there is no name, not a mark or a letter. He had worked not for human praise, but only for the glory of God and the health of his soul."<sup>2</sup>

An English historian has thus expressed a similar view of the self-abnegation of these old builders :

"The elaborate and costly ornaments which were lavished on architecture were meant to do God honor, though spending their beauties perhaps on some remote and secluded wilderness, to be witnessed only by the rude peasants of the neighborhood and the birds that hovered about the pinnacle."<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Paley has been led to say, with great truth, that these ancient builders, working as a body and not as individuals, cared less about personal profit or celebrity than about the good of the Church, and hence he concludes that if they had intended only to please the eye of man they would not have let their finest works stand alone in the midst of the marsh and the moor.<sup>4</sup>

The name of Gothic Architecture, applied to the style of building adopted by the Freemasons of the Middle Ages, is by no means suggestive of its true origin or character. The opinion once enter-

<sup>1</sup> "Sketches of Christian Art."

<sup>2</sup> Michelet, "Histoire de France," p. 370.

<sup>3</sup> Rev. T. T. Blunt, "Sketch of the Reformation in England," p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 82.

tained that it was the invention of the Goths, has long since been exploded; and notwithstanding the various hypotheses that have been advanced at different times, it is now generally conceded that this distinct style was the system of building applied by the mediæval Freemasons to the erection of cathedrals and other religious edifices.

Of this style, the distinguishing features are the pointed arch, long lancet windows, clustered columns, and a general tendency to vertical and ascending lines. Comparing it with the preceding styles, we see the whole contour and composition of building changed from the horizontal to the perpendicular, "we might almost say," to borrow the words of Paley, "from earthly to heavenly, from Pagan to Christian."<sup>1</sup>

It began to make its appearance toward the close of the 12th century, and having been adopted, or more properly speaking invented, by the association of Freemasons spread from Italy into France, into Germany, and into England, as well as every other country of Europe where these architects and builders penetrated.

Governor Pownall, toward the close of the last century, wrote a very able article containing *Observations on the Origin and Progress of Gothic Architecture, and on the Corporation of Free Masons, Supposed to be the Establishers of it as a Regular Order*,<sup>2</sup> in which he admits that William of Sens had used the same style a century before in the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Canterbury, yet he asserts that the Corporations of Freemasons "were the first architects who reduced it to and introduced it as a regular order."

He further asserts that the Corporation which existed in England was instituted by a similar corporation from abroad, and that all these corporations had been created by the Pope, by bull, diploma, or charter, about the close of the 12th or the commencement of the 13th century. This statement of the existence of a Papal bull bestowing certain privileges on the Freemasons has been repeatedly made since the date of Governor Pownall's article, by other writers, who most probably borrowed his authority for the statement.

I think that it will be admitted that the Freemasons, who were at first exclusively ecclesiastics, and whose schools of architecture

<sup>1</sup> "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Published in the "Archæologia," vol. ix., pp. 110-126.

were originally established in the monasteries, were under the protection and patronage of the Church. But that any especial bull in their favor was ever issued, though not at all improbable, has never yet been established as an historical fact. Governor Pownall, anxious to prove the truth of his statement, caused application to be made to the librarian of the Vatican, and the Pope himself is said to have ordered a minute search to be made.

The search was a vain one. The official report was that "not the least traces of any such documents could be found." Pownall, however, persistently believed that some record or copy of this charter or diploma must be somewhere buried at Rome amid forgotten and unknown bundles or rolls of manuscripts—a circumstance that he says had frequently occurred in relation to important English records.

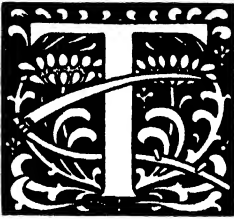
Unfortunately, therefore, for the settlement of the historic question, it by no means follows, because the Roman Catholic librarian of the Vatican, a few centuries ago, could not find a bull granting special indulgences to an association which the Popes had at a later period denounced, that no such document is in existence. Besides the too common result of an unsuccessful search for old manuscripts which has occurred, and is continually occurring, to investigators, we have in this particular case the other factor to contend with, the policy of the Roman Church. That policy has always overruled all principles of historic accuracy. Hence in subjects over which that Church has had control, suppressed documents are of no uncommon occurrence.

This question of a Papal charter, therefore, still remains *sub lite*. Krause, for instance, on the supposed authority of a statement of Ashmole, which had been communicated by Dr. Knipe to the author of the life of that antiquary, admits the fact of Papal indulgences, while Steiglitz, accepting the unsuccessful result of the application of Pownall as conclusive evidence, contends for the absurdity of any such claim.

But whether there is or is not in existence such a charter, diploma, or bull, it is very evident from history that the Freemasons of the Middle Ages first enjoyed the protection and afterward the patronage of the Church extended to them by ecclesiastical chiefs.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### TWO CLASSES OF WORKMEN, OR THE FREEMASONS AND THE ROUGH MASONS



THE art of building in the Middle Ages is presented to us by authentic history as being practiced by two distinct classes of workmen; first, the association of builders who have already been repeatedly described under the name of "Freemasons;" and, secondly, another class of workmen who were not members of the fraternity, though they were often in the cities incorporated as independent bodies.

Thus we find that in London in the 14th century, during the reign of Edward III., there was an incorporated Company of Masons who sent four delegates to the Common Council, and a Company of Freemasons, which being a smaller, and probably a more select body, sent only two.<sup>1</sup>

The Strasburg Constitutions prohibited those who had been admitted as members of the Fraternity of Freemasons from working with any other craftsmen,<sup>2</sup> evidently referring to other Masons whether incorporated or not, and who had not been made free of the Guild or Fraternity.

The old English Charges furnish the evidence that the same distinction of workmen existed in England as in Germany. For instance the "Mason, allowed," that is, he who had been accepted by the Fraternity, is forbidden to instruct the "layer" by furnishing him with moulds or patterns for work. "Also," says the York MS., "that no Master or Fellow make any mould, rule, or square of any layer nor set any layer (within the Lodge) or without to hew any mould stones."

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<sup>1</sup> Herbert, "History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies," vol. i., p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> "Strasburg Ordinances," No. 2, mit keinem Antwerk dienen: thus interpreted by Krause—daher sollen sie auch mit keinem andern Handwerke dienen.

The date of the York MS. is about the close of the 16th century. But the same regulation is found in all the subsequent manuscripts. In the Landsdowne MS., however, as well as in the Antiquity MS., which appears to be only a copy of the Landsdowne, the word is Lowen. This is evidently a blunder of a careless or an ignorant copyist, who has retained the initial capital, because in it there could have been no chance of confounding it for C, but has changed the rest of the word layer, badly written most probably in the exemplar from which he copied, into Lowen.

The correct word is, therefore, layer; and from this regulation we learn that the division of the builders in the Middle Ages was into two classes: a superior one, who are always designated in the English manuscript Constitutions and Charges as Masons, and an inferior class called layers, and sometimes, as in the Alnwick MS., rough layers. In contemporary works of the same period, not Masonic Constitutions, we also find the distinction of free mason and rough mason, being no doubt the same thing as a stone layer in contradistinction to a brick layer, a craft which belonged no more than the carpenter to the great body of Masons.<sup>1</sup>

Now what is the meaning of this word layer, which is to be classed among "the lost beauties of the English language," being retained only in the compound bricklayer?

There can be no difficulty in answering this question. In the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, the oldest dictionary of our language extant, which was compiled in the year 1440 by a Dominican Friar of Norfolk, and the latest edition of which was published in 1865 by the Camden Society, with copious and learned annotations by the late Mr. Albert Way, is the following:

"*Leyare*, or werkare wythe stone and mortere." And the Latin equivalent given for it is *Cæmentarius*.

In classical Latinity, as well as in the Low Latin of the Middle Ages, a *cæmentarius* was a builder of walls, who handled the *cæmenta* or rough stones as they came from the quarries. St. Jerome, in one of his Epistles (53), defines a *cæmentarius* as one who builds rough walls of *cæmenta*, or unhewn stones. A layer or stonelayer

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<sup>1</sup> In a work published in 1559, entitled "The Booke for a Justice of the Peace," is the following passage: "None artificer, nor labourer hereafter named, take no more nor greater wages than hereafter is limited . . . that is to say, a free mason, master carpenter, rough mason, bricklayer," etc., fol. 17.

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(the word "stone" being understood), which the *Promptorium* Latinizes by *cæmentarius*, was a rough mason whose business was simply to follow the plan of the architect, and in the erection of the walls of an edifice to lay one stone upon another, just as the bricklayer does at the present day with bricks.

Mr. Way has this interesting note on the word *Leyare* and its definition in the *Promptorium Parvulorum* :

"In the account of works at the palace of Westminster and Tower during the 14th century, preserved among the miscellaneous records of the Queen's Remembrancer, mention is made continually of *cubatores*,<sup>1</sup> or stone layers. See also the abstract of accounts relating to the erection of St. Stephen's Chapel in the reign of Edward III., printed in Smith's *Antiquities of Westminster*. In this contract for building Fotheringhay Church, the chief mason undertakes neither to 'set more nor fewer freemasons, rogh setters ne leye(r)s' upon the work but as the appointed overseer shall ordain."

The same distinction between the two classes is preserved in a statute passed in the reign of Edward VI., anno 1548. It is then enacted "that noe person or persons shall at anye tyme after the firste daye of Aprille next comynge, interrupte, denye, lett or disturbe any Freemason, rough mason, carpenter, bricklayer, playsterer," etc.<sup>2</sup>

The appellation of rough masons, rough setters, or rough layers bestowed upon these workmen of an inferior class was derived from the German. In the Strasburg Ordinances *ruh* or *roh* is applied to an unskilled or ignorant apprentice. In the German rituals *rohenstein* is the rough ashlar. Richardson defines the word rough as meaning "coarse, unpolished, savage, rude, uncivil." When the English Charges speak of a "rough mason," they mean one whose work is coarse and unpolished, and who has not the skill in stonecutting possessed by the members of the fraternity of Freemasons.

To the Freemasons, who were a brotherhood devoted to the erection principally of cathedrals and other religious edifices, every other Mason was looked upon with a species almost of contempt

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<sup>1</sup> To make "cubator" signify a man who lays stone, a layer, because a poet in the iron age of the Latin language, Plotinus, of Nola, had used the same word to designate a man who lies down (that is to denote a liar and a layer by the same word), is a travesty well calculated to astound an etymologist. But the Low Latinists were not purists.

<sup>2</sup> "Statutes of the Realm," vol. iv., p. 59.

as rude and ignorant ; he was called a rough Mason, and they refused to work with him or to impart to him any information which would assist him in his own work.

Now as to the higher class, called by historians the "Freemasons," but who in the English Constitutions are always designated as "Masons."

But in other documents of the Middle Ages we frequently meet with the word "Freemason," used in a sense evidently denoting a particular class of artisans.

As early as the year 1350, in the reign of Edward III., of England, an act of Parliament was passed in which the wages of a Master Freemason are fixed at 4 pence and that of other Masons at 3 pence. This is the earliest date for the use of the word, but it was subsequently used in other statutes, in monumental inscriptions, and in old records, and always so as to indicate that the Freemason was of a class differing from other Masons.

Whence then comes the term, from what is it derived, and what was in former times its exact meaning ? These are questions that have greatly exercised the minds of Masonic etymologists who have arrived at three very different conclusions.

The first of these conclusions, namely, that free in the word Freemason was originally *Frère* or Brother, which was prefixed by the workmen who used the French language to the word Mason, so as to make the word *Frère* Mason or Brother Mason, which was afterward corrupted into Free Mason, is mere etymological fancy hardly worth a serious refutation.

Paley says, quite dogmatically : "The name Freemasons is a corruption of *Frères Maçons*, or fraternity," and he quotes Dallaway as his authority for the opinion.<sup>1</sup>

But Dallaway, in his *Historical Account of Master and Freemason*, has expressed an opinion the reverse of this. He admits that a passage in the Leland MS. authorizes the conjecture that the denomination of Freemasons in England was merely a corruption of *Frère Maçons*, but immediately afterward he says, "but I am not borne out by their appellations on the continent," and he gives their appellations such as *Franc-Maçon* in French, *Frei Maurer* in German, and *Libero Muratore* in Italian.<sup>2</sup> None of these titles could

<sup>1</sup> "Manual of Gothic Architecture," p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Dallaway, "Master and Freemason," p. 434.

of course have been translations of *Frère*, but must have been intended to convey, in each of these languages, the idea conveyed in English by the word Free.

It is strange, too, that Dallaway should have laid any stress on the Leland MS. as authorizing even a conjecture (admitted afterward to be unplausible) that Freemason was originally *Frère Maçon*.

Now the word *Frère Maçon* does not occur in the Leland MS. Only once do we meet with *frères*, in its usual sense of brothers or members of a *confrerie* or confraternity, a sense in which it is still employed. The word invariably used is Masons, or rather Maconnes and Maconrye. There is no mention of either Freemasons or *Frère Maçons*, and nothing can be learned from it of the derivation or original meaning of the word Free.

But in fact the Leland MS. is now very generally admitted to be of no value as an historical document. Purporting to have been written in the reign of Henry VI., and by the king himself, it is now known to have been a forgery in the middle of the last century.

I think we may dismiss the attempted derivation of Free from *Frère*, as one of those allusions to which etymologists are unfortunately too often addicted.

Again it has been supposed that Freemasons were so called because they worked in Freestone, and because they were thus distinguished from other Masons, who were called Rough Masons, because they worked in rough stones. But for several reasons I cannot accept this derivation, although it is not as objectionable as the preceding one.

In the first place, if the name of the class was derived from the character of the stone worked, the proper words would be Free Stone Mason and Rough Stone Mason, and Free Mason and Rough Mason.

Again, Free Stone is not the apposite or antithesis of Rough Stone. There is no relation, contradictory or otherwise, between them.

Free Stone is any stone composed of sand or grit, which, on account of its softness, is easily cut or wrought.

Rough Stone is any stone, no matter what may be its geological character, that is still in its native state, and has not been formed or polished by the hands of the workmen. A stone may be at the same time free stone and rough stone. The word *ruh* or *roh*—

English rough—is used in the German Constitutions to signify unskilled or unpolished. An Apprentice is spoken of in them as being taken “from his rough state” (*von Ruhem auff*), which Krause interprets as “one still wholly ignorant.”<sup>1</sup> And so, also, the unpolished stone which we call the rough Ashlar, the German rituals name *das rohen Stein*.

By a “rough Mason” or a “rough layer,” the old English Masons meant a Mason who had not been thoroughly educated in the art, one who was ignorant of the principles and geometrical secrets which were possessed by the higher fraternity.

The etymology is, therefore, I think, not tenable, which would derive the two appellations Free-Mason and Rough Mason from the different geological nature of the stones on which the two classes worked. The Rough Mason often used free stone in building his walls, but he did not thereby become a Free Mason.

It must be observed that the word Free Mason is never employed in the English, German, or French Constitutions or Regulations of the Craft. There the simple word Mason or its equivalent is used. The appellation is to be found only in statutes and contracts.

But it is not to be supposed that the framers of these were acquainted with the fact that there was a distinction between the two classes founded on the possession of certain secrets. They simply intended, by the words “Free Mason” and “Rough Mason,” to recognize the fact that there were two classes of workmen, one of superior skill and superior station to the other.

But though the word “Free Mason” is not to be found in the Masonic Constitutions, it is evident that the Masons themselves had recognized it as a distinguishing title as early as the 14th century, because in the year 1377 we meet with the Company of Freemasons and the Company of Masons in the Catalogue of those which were authorized to send delegates to the Common Council of London.<sup>2</sup>

It is then evident that the word “Free” was employed, no matter what was its original meaning, to designate a superior class. I think it may justly be considered as referring to the fact that the persons called “Freemasons” were men of superior abilities, who, by being accepted into the fraternity, had become free of the guild or corporation. Masons who were not possessed of this amount of skill, and

<sup>1</sup> Als einen noch ganz Unwissenden Krause, “Kunsturkunden,” ii., 284.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert, “History of Livery Companies,” i., 34.

who were employed in labors of a less artistic character, were not permitted to work with these Freemasons—were not accepted into their fraternity ; in other words, were not made free of the guild.

A writer in the *London Freemason* says : “Originally the Operative Mason was free of his guild, and probably we have in the word a remembrance of emancipation through honest labor in towns of those who were originally *villani adscripti glebæ*”—serfs who were attached to the soil, and who could not be admitted to the freedom of the guild because the lord who owned them might at any time reclaim them.

In the earliest periods of the feudal system, before the municipalities began to assert their rights, the handicrafts were for the most part pursued by slaves. At a later period freemen also practiced the trades, but there was always a distinction between the free and the servile craftsman—a distinction which the Masons apparently retained after the cause had ceased. Krause says that these Masons were called Free because they possessed certain municipal privileges.<sup>1</sup> These privileges, according to Hope, Pownall, and many other writers, consisted in the monopoly of building churches, cathedrals, and other religious edifices, and in certain franchises granted them by Popes and other sovereigns.

Dallaway, it is true, denies, at least so far as England is concerned, that any such privileges existed. “No proof,” he says, “has been as yet adduced from any chronicle or history of this country that as a fraternity or guild the Freemasons in England possessed or held by patent any exclusive privilege whatever.”<sup>2</sup>

But if there is no positive testimony extant of patents or charters granting such privileges, the whole course of history, the phraseology of contract between Masons and their employers, the distinction made between the Freemasons and the Rough Masons in the matter of wages and many other incidental circumstances, clearly show that the Freemasons were looked upon as a superior class, and were in possession of certain privileges, social as well as professional, which were denied to the lower order of workmen.

A proof of the rank and estimation which Master Masons, Architects, or Freemasons held in society during the Middle Ages is to be found in the contract made in the year 1439 between the Abbot

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<sup>1</sup> Krause, “Kunsturkunden,” i., p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> “Master and Freemasons,” p. 425.



of St. Edmundsbury and John Wood, "Masoun," for the repairs and restoration of the great towers "in all manner of things that longe to Freemasonry."

In this contract, Wood, the Master Mason, is allowed "borde for himself as a gentilman and his servant as a yeoman, and thereto two robys, one for himselfe after a gentilman's livery."<sup>1</sup>

Though in the English Constitutions we do not meet, as I have already said, with the word "Freemason," yet its equivalent is found in the constant use of the phrase "Mason allowed" to designate one who had become a member of the fraternity; that is, who had been made "free of the guild." But I have heretofore shown that the meaning of "allowed" is "accepted," and therefore a Freemason was a Mason who had been accepted into the Fraternity.

The founders of Speculative Masonry, who in the year 1717 seceded from the operative branch of the Institution and formed the Grand Lodge of England, seemed to be aware of this signification of the word "Free," as designating one who had been "allowed" or "accepted" into the fraternity, for they assumed for themselves the title of "Free and Accepted Masons." In this way they meant to put forward the claim that they were Freemasons who had been Accepted into the Fraternity. "Free and Accepted Masons" now denoted Speculative Masons, and by this title they distinguished themselves from the lower class of Operative Masons.

Just in the same way, when they were all Operatives, the higher class were called "Freemasons" to distinguish themselves from the lower class, who were known as "Rough Masons."

Toward a perfect understanding of the true organization of the mediæval Masons, it is not necessary that we should know the correct derivation of the word Free. It is not material to this purpose that we know whether it comes from the French *frère*, and consequently that the word "Freemason" signifies a Brother Mason; or from freestone, and that it means a Mason who works on that material; or lastly that it is derived from freeman and denotes one who had been made free of the fraternity.

All that is really material to be known on this subject is that there was always a division of the mediæval builders into two

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<sup>1</sup> "Anthologia," vol. xxiii., p. 331.

classes, distinctly separate the one from the other ; and that the Freemasons occupied the superior place, superior in skill, superior in the possession of certain privileges, and therefore superior in social standing.

There are, however, two points worthy of notice in connection with this subject.

In the first place, the word "Freemason" was confined as a descriptive term to the workmen of England. Neither this nor any equivalent of it is to be found in the Masonic documents of France or Germany. The words *Franc-Maçon* and *Frei Maurer*, now so common in these languages, were not known until after the organization of Speculative Masonry in England and its propagation in those countries by the "Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons" established in 1717 in London.

The words *Franc-Maçon* and *Frei Maurer* were never applied in any document, Masonic or non-Masonic, to any of the builders of the Middle Ages in France or Germany, as Freemason was in England.

The growth of those words in those languages appears to have been in this way. There were in England, as early as the 14th century, a class of skillful builders who excluded from their companionship all other builders whose standard of knowledge and skill was lower than theirs.

This exclusive and more skillful class were recognized in the statutes of the realm, in contracts made with them, in sepulchral inscriptions, in church registers,<sup>1</sup> and in some other documents by the title of "Freemasons."

In the 17th century, at least, if not before, the word began to be used by the Masons themselves as a distinctive appellation. Thus in 1646 Ashmole wrote that he had been "made a Freemason at Warrington," and he calls those who had been just received into the fraternity, "new Accepted Masons."<sup>2</sup>

In 1717, when the Speculative Institution was established, the founders adopted both the words "Free" and "Accepted," and called themselves "Free and Accepted Masons." In the "Charges

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<sup>1</sup> Thus in the church register of the parish of Astbury are the following entries :

" 1685. Smallwod, Jos. fils Jos. Henshaw Freemason bapt. 3 die Nov.

" 1697. Jos. fils Jos. Henshaw, Freemason, buried 7 April."

<sup>2</sup> Ashmole's "Diary," October 16, 1646, and March 11, 1682.

of a Free-Mason," published in 1723 in the first edition of the *Constitutions*, the word "Freemason" is adopted as the recognized title of the members of the Fraternity, being there adopted in place of the simple word "Mason," which was used in all the Old Charges. Thus the Old Charge which forbade "Masons to work within or without the Lodge with rough layers," reads in the *Book of Constitutions* of 1723 that "Freemasons shall not work with those that are not Free."

The title "Freemason" afterward came quite commonly into use. In 1734 a book was published called the "*Free Masons' Vade Mecum*," and it is several times employed in Masonic publications of that period. "Free and Accepted Masons" and "Freemasons" were then, as it appears from contemporary publications, terms adopted by and in common use immediately after what has been called the Revival, in the beginning of the 18th century.

Now when deputations began to be "sent beyond sea" to establish lodges in foreign countries—beginning with the Deputation granted in 1728 by the Earl of Inchiquin, Grand Master, "to some Brothers in Spain to constitute a lodge at Gibraltar," succeeded very rapidly by others in Germany, Holland, France, and other countries—the title of "Freemasons," which had been adopted by the Speculative Masons of England to distinguish themselves from the purely Operative Masons, from whom they had separated, was carried into these foreign countries by those who had been appointed under the various deputations to disseminate the system.

Necessarily the English word was in each of these countries translated by those who entered the Order into an equivalent word in their own language.

So "Freemason" became in Germany "*Freimaurer*," in France "*Franc-Maçon*," in Italy "*Libero Muratore*," and so on. In all of these it will be seen that the expression "Free" has been translated by a word that has no relation either to *frère*, brother, or to freestone.

*Freimaurer*, in German, and *Franc-Maçon*, in French, like Freemason in English, conveys the idea of a freeman, who is a Mason; originally indicating a freeman of the guild, and afterward, and now, a man of a superior class.

For example, in the 17th century a Freemason was a Mason of great skill, engaged in the designing and erecting of cathedrals, as

distinguished from the common workman, who only built walls and laid or set stones.

In the 18th century a Freemason was a Speculative Mason, engaged in the erection of a spiritual temple, as distinguished from the purely Operative Masons, who labored without symbolism or philosophy at the construction of material edifices.

This same distinction into two classes was still more explicitly marked in the mediæval Masonry of Germany.

If, for instance, we refer to the Strasburg Ordinances, we find a very distinct reference to two classes of Masons under various names.

The fraternity of Masons who were united together for the construction of Cathedrals and other religious and important edifices, was called the Craft of Stonework.<sup>1</sup> Each member of this body is denominated in the ordinances either a *Meister*, Master, a *Gesell*, Companion or Fellow, or a *Werkmann*,<sup>2</sup> Workman, or, as it has been generally translated, a Craftsman. The word *Maurer* (in the old German, *Murer*) is the name given to those Masons of the lower class who in the English Constitutions are designated as rough layers. They were permitted to work only on inferior tasks, in cases of necessity.

Thus one of the ordinances of Strasburg provides as follows : If there be a need of Masons (*Murer*) to hew or set stone, the Master may employ them, so that the employers' work may not be hindered, and the men so employed shall not be subject, except with their own free will, to the regulations of the Craft.<sup>3</sup>

But the exclusive position maintained by this higher class is distinctly expressed in the second of the Strasburg Constitutions in the following words :

"Whosoever wishes to be received into this fraternity as a member, according to these regulations as they are written in this book, must promise to keep all the points and articles of our Craft of Stonework, which consists only of Masters (*Meyster*) who are skilled in constructing costly buildings and works which they have

<sup>1</sup> Das Handwerk der Steinwerk. "Strasburg Ordinances."

<sup>2</sup> In that old English dictionary of the 15th century, the "Promptorium Pavulorum," *Masone* is defined to be a *werkemann* with the Latin equivalent *lathomus*.

<sup>3</sup> Wer es auch das man der Murer, es were Stein zu bauen oder zu muren . . . die mag ein Meister wol furdern, u. s. w. "Strasburg Ordinances," No. 8.

been made free <sup>1</sup> (have the privilege to erect). They shall not work with the men of any other Craft."

The distinction between the *Werkmann*, or Freemason, and the *Murer* (*Maurer*), or Wall Builder, is expressly made in one of the Strasburg regulations which relates to Apprentices. It is there said that "if any one who has served with a *Murer* comes to a *Werkmann* to learn of him, the *Werkmann* can not receive him as an Apprentice unless he consent to serve for three years."<sup>2</sup>

But the Freemasons of Germany had another and a still more significant method of distinguishing themselves from the lower class of rough Masons; while these latter were known as *Maurer*, literally wall builders (for the German for wall is *maurer*), the higher class, the Freemasons, the men who invented and practiced Gothic architecture, called themselves *Steinmetzen*.

Now in German the verb *metzen* signifies to cut with a knife, a chisel,<sup>3</sup> or any other cutting instrument.

A *Steinmetz* is, therefore, a Stonecutter—one who with the chisel cuts the stone into various forms or decorates it with objects in relief. On the other hand, a *Maurer* is a builder of walls—a mason who roughly sets or lays one stone upon another, without any reference to beauty of design or skill of art.

The *Steinmetz*, or Stonecutter, was the Freemason; the *Maurer*, or wall builder, was the rough mason or rough layer.

Now the adoption of this word *Steinmetzen*, or Stonecutters, by the Masons who invented Gothic architecture in the Middle Ages, throws a flood of light upon the history of Masonry at that period.

A Master Stonecutter was an honorable term, and whoever wished to become an architect had to begin by learning to cut stone.<sup>4</sup>

The cutting of stone ornaments was not used before the 12th century. In the early Norman work, says Parker, the chisel was very little employed. Most of the ornaments in the churches ante-

<sup>1</sup> *Uffgefreyget, befreiheitel*, made free, that is, as Krause interprets it, authorized and privileged to do these things; and such, I think, is the true meaning of the word free in the word Freemason.

<sup>2</sup> Wer es auch das einer vor einem Murer gedient und hun zu einem Werkmann kumen, u. s. w. "Strasburg Ordinances."

<sup>3</sup> Thus a knife is *messer*, a chisel *meisel*, and a butcher one who cuts flesh, a *metzger*.

<sup>4</sup> Boisserté, "Histoire de la Cathedral de la Cologne," p. 14.

rior to that period are such as could have been readily wrought by the axe, and could have been readily produced by stone hewers. Whatever sculpture there is appears to have been executed afterward, for it was a general practice to execute sculptured work after the stones were placed in position.<sup>1</sup>

We do not find that the chisel was used, as it must have been, for deep cutting, and especially under-cutting, in any buildings of ascertained date before the year 1120.<sup>2</sup> Carving in stone occurred in Italy and the south of France at an earlier period; later in northern France and Germany, and still later in England.

This gradual extension northwardly of the art of stonecutting—the Freemasons' art—confirms the theory maintained by Mr. Hope and other writers, that the Freemasonry of the Middle Ages arose in Lombardy and spread thence over the rest of Europe.

The monk Gervase, in his description of the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Canterbury,<sup>3</sup> tells us that in the old work there was no deep sculpture with the chisel. He says that in the old Cathedral, "the arches and everything else were plain or sculptured with an axe and not with a chisel."

But when with their geometrical system of building the Freemasons had introduced the art of deep stonecutting with the chisel, they reveled in the art and the profusion of sculptured ornaments; most of them having a symbolic meaning, became wonderful in the churches and cathedrals which they erected.

Rightly, therefore, did the Freemasons of Germany, the builders of the great Cathedrals of Magdeburg, of Cologne, and of Strasburg assume the title of Stonecutters, and held themselves above the mere wall builders, who only hewed stone.

The *Steinmetz*, or Stonecutter in Germany, like the Mason or the Freemason of England, was of a higher class than the *Maurer* or builder of walls, the rough Mason or the rough layer.

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<sup>1</sup> Parker, Introduction to the "Study of Gothic Architecture," p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> The work of the monk Gervasius Dorobornensis, or Gervase of Canterbury, is contained in the collection of the "Decem Scriptores Angliæ."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### MASONS' MARKS



THE subject of Marks forms an interesting episode in the history of Masonry, both Operative and Speculative.

A Mason's Mark is a monogram, a symbol, or some other arbitrary figure chiseled by a mason on the surface of a stone for the purpose of identifying his own work and distinguishing it

from that of other workmen.

Mr. Godwin, in an article "On Masons' Marks observable on Buildings of the Middle Ages," published some years ago,<sup>1</sup> has given, perhaps, the best definition that we possess of the true character of these Sculptural figures.

He says that it can perhaps hardly be doubted that these marks "were made chiefly to distinguish the work of different individuals. At the present time the man who works a stone (being different from the man who sets it) makes his mark on the bed or other internal face of it so that it may be identified. The fact, however, that in the ancient buildings it is only a certain number of stones which bear symbols—that marks found in different countries (although the variety is great) are in many cases identical, and in all have a singular accordance in character—seems to show that the men who employed them did so by system, and that the system, if not the same in England, Germany, and France, was closely analogous in one country to that of the others."

He adds that many of these signs are evidently religious and symbolical, "and agree fully with our notions of the body of men known as the Freemasons."

That there should be a purpose of identification so that the particular work of every Mason might, by a simple inspection, be recognized by his Fellows and the Lord or Master of the Works might

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<sup>1</sup> In the "Archæologia," vol. xxx.

be enabled to attribute any defect or any excellence to its proper source, was essentially necessary to constitute a Masonic Mark.

By observing this distinction we avoid the error committed by several writers of calling every device found upon a stone a mark, and thereby giving to the system of marks a greater antiquity than really belongs to it.

Thus it has been said by one writer that "Masonic Marks have been discovered on the Pyramids of Egypt, on the ruined buildings in Herculaneum, Pompeii, Greece, and Rome, and on the ancient cathedrals, castles, etc., that are to be found in almost every country of Europe." <sup>1</sup>

But the fact is that the inscriptions and devices found on stones in buildings of antiquity were most probably mythological, symbolical, or historical, being a brief record of or allusion to some important event that had occurred. If any of them were proprietary—that is, intended to identify the work or the ownership of some particular person—there is no evidence that any well-organized system of proprietary marks existed in that very early period.

Lord Lindsay, in his *Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land*, inserts a description of a square building or monumental chamber, near Baalbeck, given to him by Mr. Farren, Consul-General in Syria, which was covered with small marks, on which Mr. Farren makes the following remarks:

"It is very remarkable that the faces of this monument are covered with small marks cut on the stones—hieroglyphics I can not call them—they are too numerous to be accidental. I was convinced that they were not from the mere process of chiseling." <sup>2</sup>

On this statement, Mr. Godwin remarks: "Whether or not they were analogous to the marks under consideration (Masons' Marks) I do not pretend to say." <sup>3</sup>

I can not myself doubt that they were not. The fact that innumerable monuments of the ancient East have been found covered with devices and hieroglyphics which the comparatively recent labors of learned mentalists and antiquaries have deciphered and shown to be mythological or symbolical, and very often historical,

<sup>1</sup> Lyon, "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," chap. ix., p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Lindsay, "Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land," vol. ii., p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> Two letters to Mr. Ellis on Masonic Marks, by George Godwin, in the "Archæologia," vol. xxx., p. 120.



would lead us to infer that those on the monument near Baalbeck were of the same character.

The sculptures on the Pyramids, which Lyon refers to as "Masonic Marks," are really inscriptions, mostly.

Thus Mr. Ainsworth tells us that in the ruins of Al-Hadhr, in Mesopotamia, "every stone, not only in the chief building, but in the walls and bastions and other public monuments when not defaced by time, is marked with a character, which is for the most part either a Chaldean letter or numeral. Some of the letters resemble the Roman A, and others were apparently astronomical signs, among which the ancient mirror and handle  $\varphi$  were very common."<sup>1</sup>

Ainsworth's description is too meager to supply the foundation for an hypothesis, but we are hardly warranted in ascribing to the Chaldean letters and astronomical signs the character of proprietary marks, such as those practiced by the Freemasons of the Middle Ages.

The sculptures on the Pyramids which Mr. Lyon refers to as "Masonic marks," are, as we have reason for believing, inscriptions, mostly in the cursive character generally recording the names of the different kings in whose reigns they were constructed.

Again, the Messrs. Waller, in a work on *Monumental Brasses*,<sup>2</sup> describe a monument to Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne, his wife, at Wesley Waterless, in Cambridgeshire, about 1325, which is inscribed with a monogram or device consisting of the letter N, with a half moon on one side, and a star, or more probably the sun, on the other, and a mallet above. This is supposed to have been the device of the artist. But the same is found on a seal attached to a deed dated 1272, wherein Walter Dixi, called *Cæmentarius de Bernewelle*, conveys certain lands to his son Lawrence. The seal has for its legend the words, *S. Walter : Le : Massune*.

Messrs. Waller think that the occurrence of a similar device in two instances seems to show that it was not an individual mark, but that it may have been the badge of some guild of Masons. On the contrary, the use of it as a seal on a deed of conveyance proves that

<sup>1</sup> Ainsworth's "Travels," vol. ii., p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> "A Series of Monumental Brasses from the 13th to the 16th Century," by J. G. and L. A. B. Waller.

it was a family device. It is probable that the monumental brass referred to above was the work of the son or grandson of the *Cæmentarius* or Mason who conveyed the land fifty-three years before, and whose family seal as well as his profession was retained by his descendant.

Mr. Godwin gives from the Gloucester Cathedral a mark or device in the form of a seal, consisting of a mallet between a half moon and a sun. This will give some show of probability to the hypothesis that this device was the badge of some early Masonic guild. But the interpolation of the letter would also tend to show that Walter Dixi had adopted the guild device with the addition of the letter, to form his own private seal, which he also used as his mark.

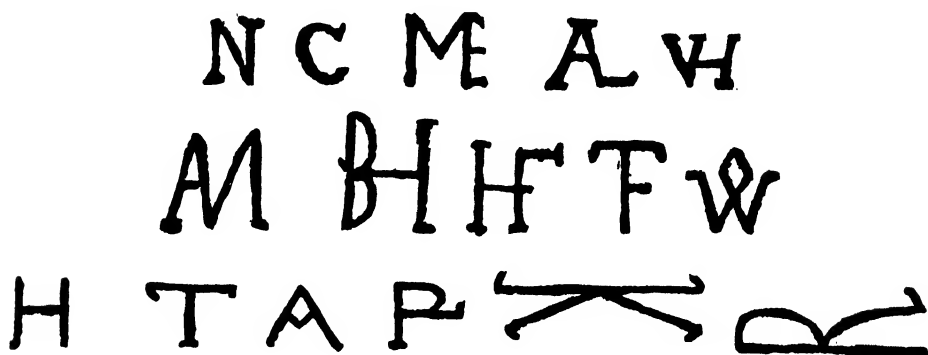
If this be so, then this would be a very early specimen of 'a proprietary mark. While, however, it presents the characteristic of a mark used to designate the personality of a workman who constructed the brass, it differs in its complicated form from the more simple marks used by the mediæval Masons. The Messrs. Waller, whose theory was that it was the badge of a guild of Masons, say that this will suggest "that the same minds that designed the architectural structures of the Middle Ages also designed the sepulchral monuments." Without accepting the truth of the premises there can be no doubt of the correctness of the conclusion. The same artistic skill and taste that were displayed in the exterior construction of churches and cathedrals was also employed in their interior decorations, sepulchral and otherwise, and the same class of artists were engaged in both tasks.

If the profession and the "seal of Walter the Mason" were retained, as we may well suppose, by his descendant, then we have the very best evidence that the sepulchral brass of Sir John de Creke and his wife were designed and constructed by a Mason, who used his family seal as his proprietary mark.

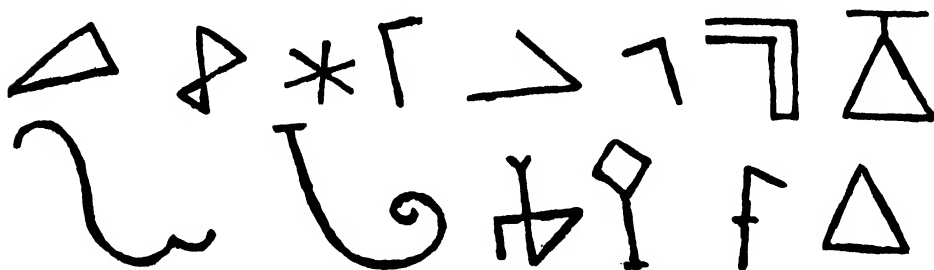
Letters, as initials of the names of the workmen, are repeatedly found among the mediæval Masons' marks. This letter N is met with on stones in the Church of St. Rudegonde, at Poitiers, in France, and in different churches in Scotland.

Mr. Lyon gives, from the Minute Book of the Lodge of Edinburgh, and Mr. Godwin, from personal observation of stones in the churches of England and the continent of Europe, many marks

consisting only of letters, single and double, of which the following are specimens :



Besides this class of what may be called literal marks, being evidently the initials of the names of the workmen who inscribed them, there was a second class of marks which were geometrical, consisting of angles, curves, circles, and other mathematical figures. These were far more common than the literal, and have been found in great variety. The following are a few specimens taken from English, Scottish, and Continental churches :



The great prevalence of these marks, composed of mathematical lines, is a strong confirmation of the truth of the opinion entertained by Paley, Lindsay, and many other writers, that the secret of the mediæval Freemasons was the application of the principles of geometry to the art of building. This secret, the magnificent results of which were exhibited in the great Cathedrals and other massive edifices erected during the Middle Ages in the Gothic style, has been lost to the professional or Operative Masons of the present day. But its influence is still felt by the Speculative Freemasons, who succeeded the Operative Lodges as organized bodies,

and who, when they abandoned the operative art, or rather transmuted it into a science, still retained, so far as they possibly could, the relics of the older institution.

Hence we find these Speculative, or, as they called themselves, "Free and Accepted Masons," made "right angles, horizontals, and perpendiculars" the basis of all their manual modes of recognition, and declared that "geometry was the foundation of Masonry."

A third class of marks may be designated as the symbolical. And here I am compelled to dissent from the views of Bro. Lyon, who says that "there is no ground for believing that in the choice of their marks the 16th century Masons were guided by any consideration of their symbolical quality or of their relation to the propositions of Euclid."<sup>1</sup>

Symbolism, as a means of giving a language and a spiritual meaning to their labor, was a science thoroughly understood and practiced by the Masons who invented the Gothic style. Findel says that they symbolized their working tools, a custom in which they have been closely imitated by their Speculative successors.

The symbolism of the Gothic architects has already been sufficiently discussed in a previous chapter, and it is now necessary to advert to it only in reference to the fact that the symbols used by the builders in the ornamentation of the churches furnished them also with a fertile supply of marks.

We must not, therefore, confound the more complicated decorations used as symbols on the exterior and in the interior of churches, such as gargoyles, rose windows, cathedral wheels, etc., with the simpler forms of some of these symbols which were adopted by the builders as proprietary marks.

As these symbolic marks presupposed that those who adopted them to designate their work must have understood their meaning, it would not be a very bold assumption to believe that the use of them for that purpose was confined to the more intellectual portion of the workmen. The adoption of a symbol for a mark would, in general, indicate that the person who adopted it was one who had extended his studies to the highest principles of his art and had made himself conversant with the science of symbolism.

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 68.

If this reasoning were accepted, we should then recognize another class lower in culture than the former and less familiar with the occult elements of their profession, though perhaps equally skillful in all its practical operations. Being therefore familiar with the method of applying geometry to the art of building, these workmen would be likely to select mathematical figures for marks.

Pursuing the same train of reasoning we would find a third and still lower class, far inferior to either of the two preceding classes in intellectual culture and having sluggish minds wholly uninspired by anything that was not purely practical in their profession. As they would be compelled, by the regulations of the guild or as they were guided by their own inclination, to distinguish the stones which they had wrought from those of other workmen, we might suppose that they would be content to achieve that object by using the simplest method that could present itself, which, of course, would be the initial letter of their name.

We would thus have, if we accepted this theory, an easy method of detecting when we inspected the stones of a mediæval edifice constructed by the old Gothic Freemasons, not only the practical skill in architecture of the builders whose works have been individualized by their proprietary marks, but also the intellectual cultivation of each workman. This one we might say was high in art, for he had cultivated the symbolism which was its highest development; this one had not aspired so high, but had confined himself to its geometric formula; but this one was low in intellectual cultivation, with little if any identity or imagination, for he had contented himself with no more ingenious device to designate his labor than the simple sculpture of a letter of his name.

The acceptance of such a theory as this would, I confess, very readily relieve the antiquary from all the embarrassments which he encounters, in the attempt to explain the reason of this diversity in the character of the Masonic marks of the Middle Ages, and would enable him to explain why they are not all of one kind—not all monogrammatic, or all geometrical, or all symbolic.

Unfortunately, however, for the easy solution of the problem, another theory has been proposed by M. Didron, to which further reference will be directly made, which ascribes the monogrammatic marks to the higher class of workmen or overseers, and the symbolic and mathematical to the inferior class of masons.

This theory is not untenable, because it is based upon the well-known fact that in the Middle Ages the art of writing was not so generally diffused as it is now. Many persons of high station were unable to sign their names, and there are instances where kings have affixed the sign of the cross to charters, assigning as a reason *pro ignorantia literarum* in consequence of their ignorance of writing. Now, it is not to be supposed that the lower order of Masons were any better instructed, and as the use of initials would indicate a knowledge of letters, it may be inferred that only the more educated part of the fraternity used this method of making their proprietary mark, while crosses, angles, shoes, triangles, and other similar figures would be adopted by those who were unacquainted with the use of letters.

But reasonable and plausible as this theory may at first glance appear, neither it nor the former are sustained by the facts that are within our knowledge.

In Mr. Lyon's most valuable work on the Edinburgh Lodge we will find several fac-similes of minutes of the lodge, in which are the signatures of the officers and members. Now, a careful inspection of these marks does not reveal any such arraignment as is indicated in either of the two theories, and, therefore, supports neither.

Let us take, for instance, a minute of the lodge in June, 1600. Here there are thirteen signatures and thirteen marks. Of these but one, that of the Warden, Thomas Vier, or Weir, is a monogram; the twelve others, all of them *Maisteris*, or Masters, are mathematical, or symbolical. Here we might infer that the chief officer alone used a monogram, which would, to some extent, sustain M. Didron's theory.

But on the inspection of another minute of the year 1634 we find that the Deacon and Warden use initial letters for their marks, while Anthony Alexander, the highest Masonic officer in the kingdom, being the King's Master of the Work, adopts a symbolic mark, a practice that was imitated by Sir Alexander Strachan, who had just been admitted as a Fellow Craft.

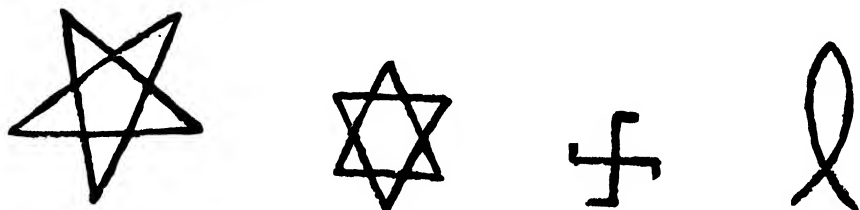
There is so much contradiction in these records, in reference to any appropriation of marks of a particular kind to distinctive classes of workmen, that we are compelled to leave the whole question "under advisement."

It is, perhaps, a plausible solution to suppose that the choice of

a mark being left entirely to each workman it became a mere matter of taste, and that while some were contented with a monogram or merely an initial letter, others, more imaginative, would select a symbol, or, if they were peculiarly mathematical in their notions, would take a geometrical figure.

It was probably only to one of the first class that could be truthfully assigned the title borne by that skillful architect, who had been summoned from Germany by Ludovic Sforza to complete the Cathedral of Milan, and who, doubtless for his skill in symbolic architecture by which he gave to stones an instructive voice, was called *Magister de vivis lapidibus*—"Master of living stones."

Four of these symbolic marks, which are of comparatively frequent occurrence, are the pentalpha, the double triangle, the fylfot, and the *vesica piscis*, which are delineated in that order in the following cut :



It is worthy of note that not one of these four marks here delineated are of purely Masonic origin. The first, which is the Pentalpha, is derived from the Greek, and was, in the school of Pythagoras, a symbol of health. Among the Orientalists it was deemed to be a talisman against evil, and is often seen on old coins of Britain and Gaul, where it is supposed to have been a symbol of Deity. It was finally adopted by the early Christians, who referred its five points to the five wounds of Jesus, and it is probable that through this character as an ecclesiastical symbol it passed over to the Freemasons, whose organization, as we have seen, was at first purely ecclesiastical.

The second is a Hebrew symbol and known as the shield of David, and sometimes as the seal of Solomon, and was considered by the ancient Jews as a talisman of great efficacy, because it had a recondite allusion to the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered, incommunicable name of God. The early Christians adopted it and made the two intersecting triangles symbols of the two natures of Christ,

the divine and human. Thence it became a favorite decoration of the Gothic architects and is to be found in most of the mediæval churches.

The third mark, here delineated, is what is known as the Fyl-fot, or Mystic cross of the Buddhists. It is found in Egypt, in Etruria, on the Scandinavian Runic stones, and on British and Gaulish coins.

The fourth of these marks is known as the *Vesica Piscis*. The fish was universally accepted among the early Christians as a symbol of Jesus, and is found constantly inscribed on the tombs in the Catacombs. The fish was adopted as an emblem of Jesus, because the letters of the Greek word for fish form the initials of the words in the same language which signify "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour." At first, as it appears in the Catacombs, it presented the correct, though rudely drawn, shape of a fish. It afterward assumed the abbreviated form of an oval. In this latter form it was frequently employed by the Freemasons of the Middle Ages as a symbolic decoration, and the seals of all religious communities and ecclesiastical persons were made of the same shape.

Albert Dürer, who was a distinguished architect of the 15th century, wrote a work on Geometry in which he says that the *vesica piscis* is formed by two intersecting circles which produce two pointed arches, one above and one below. It is probable that it was in reference to this idea, which was not confined to Albert Dürer, that the pointed arch, the peculiar characteristic of the Gothic style, was suggested by the intersection of the two circles which also form the *vesica piscis*, that the Freemasons adopted it as a mark, though its early religious origin would also sufficiently account for the introduction of it into church or Gothic architecture.

But the further discussion of these symbolic marks appertains more properly to a subsequent portion of this work which is to be specially devoted to the investigation and interpretation of Masonic symbolism.

Various other classifications of these marks have been made by different writers who have investigated this interesting subject.

M. Didron, who collected a great many of these marks in France, thought that they were divided into two classes, namely, those of the overseers of the works, the *magistri operum*, and the men who wrought the stones. The marks of the first class, he says, consist



generally of monogrammatic characters and are placed separately on the stones ; while those of the second class partake more of the nature of symbols, such as shoes, trowels, mallets, and other objects of a similar kind.

Other writers have divided these marks into three classes, and suppose that some were peculiar to the Apprentices, others to the Fellows, and others again to the Masters.

There is abundant historical evidence, especially in the Ordinances of the German Masons, that Apprentices were sometimes invested with a mark, particularly when, for certain reasons, they were permitted to travel, before the expiration of their time, in search of employment.

But I do not find any authentic means by which we can distinguish from the appearance of any mark, or from any other cause, the marks which were peculiar to any grade, or by which we can authoritatively distinguish the mark of an Apprentice from that of a Fellow or Master.

Speaking of the traditional arrangement of marks into distinctive classes for each of the three grades of Masters, Fellows, and Apprentices, Mr. Lyon says that "the practice of the Lodge of Edinburgh, or that of Kilwinning, as far as can be learned from their records, was never in harmony with the teachings of tradition on that point."<sup>1</sup>

What is thus said of the Scottish Masons may, I think, be said with equal correctness of those of Germany and England. Indeed if, as will hardly be denied, the system of proprietary marks was originally derived from the German Masons, who perfected, if they did not invent, it at Strasburg, it is reasonable to suppose that the same or very similar regulations must have prevailed in every country into which the system was introduced. There might have been some modifications to suit local circumstances, but there would have been no radical changes.

We must, therefore, reject the theory that there was any distinction of marks appropriated to the three ranks of workmen. Certainly, at the present day, we have no authority for recognizing any such distinction.

There are, however, outside of any question as to the classifica-

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 69.

tion of the marks many circumstances and conditions connected with them which are of a highly interesting character.

In the first place, the antiquity of the custom among architects and builders of placing marks upon stones is worthy of notice. But in treating this question of the early origin and use of marks by builders, we must not forget the distinction, which has already been referred to, between such marks as were used simply as symbols, and intended to express some religious idea, and those which were adopted by builders to designate and claim the proprietorship in a stone, and which have hence been called proprietary marks.

There is the very best evidence, that of the stones themselves, to prove that symbols were sometimes represented by hieroglyphics, and sometimes by pictured representations of objects. The hieroglyphical inscriptions on the monuments of ancient Egypt and the emblems sculptured in profusion on the topes or Buddhist towers of Central India,<sup>1</sup> though often resembling the more modern Masonic marks, are known to have been used only as the expressions of religious ideas. They were symbols and not marks.<sup>2</sup>

The proprietary marks may, however, be traced as far back as the end of the 10th century, and are to be found upon the walls of the Cathedral of St. Mark in Venice. As this edifice was constructed after the Byzantine method and by Greek architects brought to Venice by the government for that purpose, we may safely adopt the conclusion of Mr. Fort, that Masonic proprietary marks were first introduced into western Europe by the corporations of Byzantine Masons.<sup>3</sup>

It is very probable that the use of Masonic marks at that period was regulated by a system similar to that which prevailed at a later time among the German Masons. But this can be only a matter of conjecture. No regulations on the subject have been preserved, if any such existed. All that we can presume from the testimony of the stones themselves, is that as the design of these marks was to

<sup>1</sup> See Fergusson's "Tree and Serpent Worship; or, Illustrations of Mythology and Art in India," *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Belzoni, in his narrative of his operations in opening the second pyramid, had said that he got a clew to the entrance by certain marks on the exterior stones, and this has been fancifully accepted as a proof that proprietary marks were used by the pyramid builders, although it is very evident that those marks were only hieroglyphic inscriptions.

<sup>3</sup> Fort, "Early History and Antiquities of Masonry," ii., p. 325.

afford the means of distinguishing the work of each artisan, each mark must have been the exclusive property of the mason who used it.

It is not until the organization of the fraternity of Freemasons, which took place at Strasburg Cathedral in the 15th century, and the adoption of their Ordinances, that we obtain any documentary information of the mode in which the proprietary marks of the mediæval builders were regulated.

The universality of these marks is another point in their history that is worthy of notice. By their universality is meant their prevalence in every country into which the Freemasons penetrated, and into which they extended their peculiar system of architecture. From the northern parts of Scotland to the island of Malta, we will meet with these marks sculptured on the stones of buildings which had been constructed by this brotherhood of builders. It is curious says Mr. Godwin, to find these marks exactly the same in different countries, and descending from early times to the present day.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that in a great many instances identical marks have been found in countries widely separated, proves, as Mr. Godwin claims, in a passage already quoted, that the men who employed them did so by a system which must have prevailed in all essential points in all those countries.

M. Didron gives the following illustration of this fact. He found stones marked in the Cathedral of Rheims with a certain monogrammatic character, and the outline of the sole of a shoe; other stones with the same monogram and the outline of two soles, and others again with the same character and the outline of three soles.

The use of the same monogram would indicate a close connection, perhaps in the same guild or lodge, while the variation in the number of soles would indicate that each of the marks belonged to a different person.

This mark M. Didron calls the shoe mark—a very proper designation. As he found the same shoe mark at Strasburg, and in no other place, he accounts very reasonably for that fact by supposing

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<sup>1</sup>“History in Ruins; a Handbook of Architecture for the Unlearned,” by George Godwin, F.R.S., London, 1858.

that certain of the workmen at Rheims had been brought from Strasburg.

Dr. Krause has given in his great work a plate of marks found in the church of Batalha in Portugal, and which he says are similar to marks found in a church near Jena in Germany.<sup>1</sup> One of them of a rather complicated form is also to be seen among the marks recorded in the minute book of the Lodge of Edinburgh, copies of which are contained in Mr. Lyon's History of that lodge.



Amid the immense variety of marks suggested to the mind of the Mason, by an unlimited number of objects, it is very likely that sometimes two stonemasons, living at remote distances from each other, might, by a mere accident of caprice, select the same object for the mark of each. This especially might happen in the case of figures well known, from some religious or symbolic use to which they had been applied. Such, for instance, were the pentalfa, the mystical *vesica piscis*, or fish, the shield of David, the square and compass, and others of a like import, which were familiarly known in the Middle Ages as religious symbols.

Hence the fact that any one of these figures is found to be inscribed on stones in two or more places, would not necessarily indicate that the same workman had migrated from one of these places to the others and carried with him his own peculiar mark. Two, three, or more Masons, living in different places and who had never seen each other, might each have selected, without reference to the others, so familiar a figure as the pentalfa or the fish,<sup>2</sup> for his proprietary mark. And this undoubtedly did occur, for we find these figures used as marks in buildings very remotely distant from each other, and sculptured at such different epochs as to make it impossible that they could all have been the work of one and the same man.

But, as a general rule, when we meet with the same mark in two

<sup>1</sup> "Drei altest. Kunsturkunden," iii., 311.

<sup>2</sup> The *vesica piscis*, at first in the form of a fish, was placed by the early Christians on the tombs in the Catacombs of Rome, as a symbol of salvation by the waters of baptism. It was adopted, afterward, as a symbol in Christian art of the Saviour, and was so used by the Freemasons in the decoration of churches. Then some of the workmen, impressed with a religious feeling, took it as a proprietary mark, and it is found as such on stones of many mediæval buildings.

places, between which there may have been a possible connection, and at times not far separated, it is a legitimate presumption that the marks belonged to the same person, and that he had migrated from one place to the other and had carried his skill and the mark of his skill with him.

The method by which these marks were obtained by the workmen or bestowed upon them is perhaps the most important and the most interesting part of their history.

The knowledge of the Regulations of the Strasburg Masons and of the customs of the same fraternity in Scotland has been transmitted to us, and we are at no loss to describe the method of bestowing marks which was practiced in Germany and Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, singular that neither in the Regulations of Etienne Boileau in France, nor in any of the old Constitutions in England, is there the slightest reference to the subject of Masonic proprietary marks.

We learn, however, from the inspection of buildings still remaining, that the custom of using proprietary marks was practiced by the Masons in both those countries, and we may justly presume that the same or analogous regulations as to their government existed among the French and English Masons as did among the German and Scottish.

Among the German Freemasons of the Middle Ages, when an Apprentice had served his time he became a Fellow, and on being admitted into the Fraternity he received a mark, which he was to carve on the stones which he wrought, so as to identify his work.

The peculiar form of the mark may, we suppose, have been selected by the workman, though the statutes speak of it as having been "granted and conceded to him by the craft or corporation," and having been once selected or granted, he was never, as we learn from a clause in the Strasburg Ordinances of 1563,<sup>2</sup> permitted afterward to change it—wherever, in the course of his nomadic life as

<sup>1</sup> It is very true that the existence of marks is recognized only in a single passage of the Ordinances of Strasburg, but we have ample information as to the regulations on the subject in the writings of Steiglitz, Fallon, Winzer, and other German authors who have thoroughly investigated the subject.

<sup>2</sup> Es soll auch keiner sein ehrenzeichen, das irne von einem Handtwerck verilichen und vergont worden ist, für sich selbs und eigens gewaltz nicht endern "Ordnung der Steinmetz," anno 1462, art. 73.

a wandering artisan, he might travel—into whatsoever region he might go in search of work, however distant it might be, he was bound to use the same mark in designating the materials which he had wrought.

Hence it is that we account, in a great many instances, for the repetition of the same mark in various places widely separated. Sometimes it might happen that, by a casual coincidence, two masons, in different places and wholly unknown to each other, would choose the same figure for a mark, but, as a general rule, especially where the mark was at all complicated or peculiar in shape, it would be right to infer that the stone so marked in two places must have been the work of the same artisan who had immigrated from one place to the other.

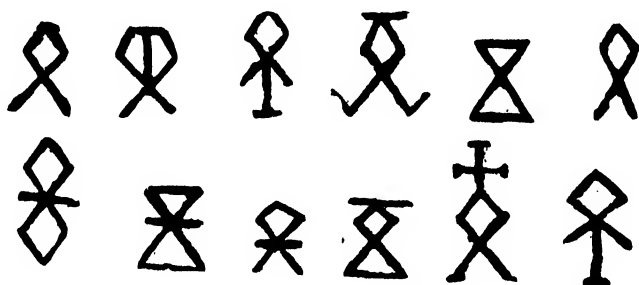
Thus, as it has already been shown, the “shoe marks,” as they have been called, which are very peculiar and complex, accompanied as each is by a monogram, having been found in the Cathedral of Strasburg and also in that of Rheims, it has been justly assumed by M. Didron that they were the proprietary marks of certain Masons of Strasburg who had been brought to Rheims and who continued to use there those marks of proprietorship which they had originally adopted at the former place.

From this necessity of identification, so that the stones wrought by one Mason might be easily distinguished from those which were worked by all the others, it followed that no two workmen who were attached to the same sodality or lodge ever selected precisely the same mark. There were some forms, such as angles, crosses, squares, and triangles, which, being familiar to these geometric Masons, would naturally be suggested to the mind as appropriate figures for marks, and such figures were, accordingly, often selected. But in every case some modification of the original form has been made, which, however minute, has been sufficient to show a distinct difference, so as to easily enable every inspector to recognize it.

Thus of ninety-one proprietary marks copied by Mr. Lyon in his *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh* from the minute-book of that lodge, no two can be found which are precisely alike. Yet it will be also found that certain forms seem to have been suggested to different minds, but, as has been already said, the original form has always been adopted, with some addition or change necessary to preserve its character and usefulness as a token of proprietorship.

Thus the figure of a lozenge with two sides extended inferiorly, which I am inclined to think was at first suggested by the *vesica piscis* given in a preceding page of this work, with the circle changed into straight lines for the greater facility of being carved on stone, appears to have been a favorite mark.

Of this mark I have found no less than eleven variations, all of them completely distinct, each from the others, and yet every one preserving evident traces of the original type. Of these marks the following copies are here inserted, taken from the two plates in Bro. Lyon's work. The first is the original type, and it will be readily seen, by inspection, how much and yet how little all the others differ from it.



This is a very striking instance of the manner in which these old Masons often fabricated their proprietary marks. One would select some popular and well-known symbol, and several others of less inventive genius would copy his design with some slight modification, or, in the language of the heralds, each would bear his mark "with a difference."

And as the heralds invented and used these "differences" in coat armor, to indicate a descent of all the bearers from one common ancestor, so might we not, with the aid of a very little romance, suppose that the owners of these similar marks bore some close affinity by relationship or friendship and intimacy to the owner of the original type.

But this thought is scarcely worth pursuing, though the results of an investigation on this point would be very interesting if we had any authentic method of making it.

As a general rule, Masters and Fellows only were entitled to use marks. But in Germany there were certain circumstances under which the privilege was extended to Apprentices. Thus according

to the Statutes of 1462, when a Master had no employment for his Apprentice, he permitted him to go forth in search of work, and on such occasions a mark was assigned to him.<sup>1</sup>

But this was only a temporary loan to be used by the Apprentice while away. It was still the Master's mark. Apprentices in Germany were not invested with marks during their *Lehrjaren* or time of apprenticeship.

This appears from the next statute in the same Ordinances, where it is expressly stated that "no Master shall be permitted to bestow a mark upon his Apprentice until he had served out his time."<sup>2</sup>

It will be noted that in the former of these regulations which have just been cited, the verb "to lend," *verleihen*, is used, and in the latter the verb is "to grant or bestow," *verschenken*. The Apprentice might get the temporary loan of a mark for a special purpose, but under no circumstances could he be permanently invested with one. That prerogative belonged only to the Masters and Fellows.

It was different with the Scottish Freemasons. The Schaw Statutes, promulgated by William Schaw, Master of Work in 1598 and in 1599, had the same authority with the Masons in Scotland as the "Old Charges" had in England, the Ordinances of Strasburg and Torgau had in Germany, or the Regulations of Etienne Boileau had in France.

Accepting the authority of these Statutes we can be at no loss on the subject of marks. They say nothing about the marks of Apprentices, but they direct that on the reception into the fraternity of a Master or Fellow, his name and mark shall be inserted in a book kept for the purpose, together with the date of his reception.

But the minutes of Mary's Chapel Lodge and of Kilwinning Lodge furnish ample evidence that the privilege of the mark was sometimes extended to Apprentices, that their marks were also registered, and that they paid a fee for the registration.

It is probable that a satisfactory reason may be assigned why the Apprentices in Scotland received the privilege of marks which, as far as can be learned, was not conferred upon them in other countries.

Apprentices elsewhere were always under the immediate control of their Masters, and did no work independently and for which they

<sup>1</sup> "Ordnung der Steinmetzen vom Jahre, 1462," No. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 31.



were responsible to the owners, the Masters of course assuming all responsibility for the acts of their Apprentices.

But in Scotland, Apprentices were sometimes ~~permitted~~ to undertake work for themselves, ~~and thus~~ for a time they became as ~~Masters, and were therefore~~, like them, required to have a proprietary mark.

Thus in the Schaw Statutes for 1598 we meet with this clause, which is here, however, transferred from the archaic Scottish idiom of the original to our modern intelligible vernacular :

"Item, it shall not be lawful for an Entered Apprentice to take in hand any greater task or work than will extend to the sum of ten pounds, under the penalty aforesaid, namely twenty pounds, and that task being done, he shall undertake no more without the license of the Masters or Warden where they dwell."

Here the position of the Scotch Apprentice was similar to that occupied by the German, when the Master, having no work for him, permitted him to travel in search of employment and at the same time loaned him his mark ; that is, gave him permission to use it and to inscribe it on the stones which he finished.

But the Scotch Apprentice was more liberally treated. His mark became a permanent possession, and like those of the Masters and Fellows was registered in the book of the lodge.

As to the formality with which the Mason was invested with his mark, the custom varied in Scotland and in Germany. What it was in England and France we can not tell, as no records touching this subject are extant.

In Scotland the registering of the mark as well as the name of the Fellow Craft appears from the Schaw Statutes to have been a necessary part of the form of reception. But it does not follow that he was at that time invested with it, for he may have selected it while an Apprentice, for the minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh show that any Apprentice might have a mark if he was willing to pay for it.<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence that any especial ceremony beyond that of registration accompanied what in Scottish phraseology was called the giving, choosing, taking or receiving of a mark. In none of the Scottish records, says Bro. Lyon, is there anything pointing to a special ceremony in connection with their adoption.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

The custom was otherwise in Germany. Findel describes the ceremony of reception, which resembled, in many respects, the modern form of initiation into the First degree. Of this rather impressive ceremony the investment with a peculiar mark constituted a preliminary part.<sup>1</sup>

The Ordinances of 1462 prescribed that when a mark is presented there shall be a banquet given by the Master of the Lodge, to which a few ecclesiastics and not more than ten Fellows shall be invited. The cost of this feast was to be very moderate, and if the workman who received the mark, and in whose honor it was given, desired to have a larger provision, it was to be provided at his expense.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Krause, in commenting on this article of the 1563 Ordinances, says that everyone who was to be admitted a Fellow received at the time a mark which was to be peculiar to himself, consisting of straight lines and curves joined together in the form of angles.<sup>3</sup>

According to Heldmann this mark was called the *Ehrenzeichen*, or distinctive mark of a Fellow, and that a copy of it was appended to the margin of the register or record of his admission.<sup>4</sup>

Krause calls it also "*Namenchiffer*," the cipher of the name, and adds, that with it the Fellow marked all stones in the making of which superior skill was employed.

"Hence we find," he says, "in every country of Europe in the buildings which were constructed by Gothic art on single stones, and also on the outside of the edifice, such name, ciphers, or marks."

Krause also says that at the time of giving the Fellow his mark, he probably also received a particular name.

But of this circumstance, which, after all, Krause relates as only a probability, I have met with no substantiating testimony in any other authority.

I am inclined to believe, contrary to the opinion of some writers, that there was but little or indeed no ceremony of any secret nature accompanying the bestowal of the mark. The only formality appears to have consisted in the giving by the lodge of a banquet.

<sup>1</sup> "History of Freemasonry" (Lyon's Translation), p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> "Ordnung der Steinmetzen vom Jahre, 1563."

<sup>3</sup> "Kunsturkunden," iii., p. 311.

<sup>4</sup> "Die drei ältesten geschichtlichen Denkmale der Deutschen Freimaurerbrüderschaft," Arnau, 1819, s. 282.

But that there were exoteric ceremonies accompanying this is to be inferred from the fact that a few ecclesiastics were admitted among the guests.

The giving of a banquet by the lodge was also prescribed by the Schaw Statutes of 1599 to be given by and in the lodge on the entry of Apprentices and the admission of Fellow Crafts.<sup>1</sup> But Mr. Lyon thinks that the custom was afterward abolished and the feast compounded for by a sum of money paid by the entrant to the lodge.<sup>2</sup>

The Masons often made use of their marks as seals, and Steiglitz has given, in his work on *Old German Architecture*,<sup>3</sup> several specimens of marks used as seals. We have already seen, in a preceding part of this chapter, that the mark of Walter Dixi, the English Mason, was adopted by him as a family seal and affixed as such to a deed of conveyance in the 14th century.

Lastly we have to inquire whether proprietary marks were hereditary. We have no evidence that there was any statute or Ordinance regulating this matter, but there can hardly be any doubt that in many instances the son voluntarily adopted the mark of his father. The case of the family of Dixi, just referred to, is an instance in point where a mark appears to have descended through at least three generations.

But a circumstance occurred during the Session of the Archæological Association at Canterbury in September, 1844, which it would seem ought to set this question of the descent of marks by voluntary inheritance completely at rest.

It is stated in the *Archæological Journal* that a member of the Association, believing that marks were quite arbitrary on the part of the workmen and had no connection either one with another or with Freemasonry, requested Mr. Godwin to accompany him to the Mason's yard which was attached to the Cathedral. When there he called one of the elder men and asked him to make his mark upon a piece of stone. The man complied, and being asked why he made that particular form, said that it was his father's mark

<sup>1</sup> All bankattis for entrie of prenteis or fallow of craftis to be maid within the said Lodge of Kilwinning, Schaw Statutes, 1599.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> "Von altdeutscher Baukunst." C. S. Steiglitz, Leipzig, 1820.









and his grandfather's mark, and that his grandfather had received it from the lodge.<sup>1</sup>

Doubtless if the inquiry had been continued it would have been found that many other marks had passed from father to son. Indeed, nothing is more natural where the latter has pursued the profession of the former.

Our investigations have led to the following conclusions:

1. The existence of proprietary marks on European buildings may be traced as far back as the 10th century, and they were probably brought over at that time by the Greek artists who introduced the Byzantine style of architecture, for which the Freemasons afterward substituted the Gothic.

2. But it was not until the 15th century that we were furnished with any historical evidence that there was an organized system of laws by which the imparting, owning, and using of these marks was regulated. Doubtless such a system had been in existence long before, but its practice was regulated by oral and traditional usages, until old customs, having begun to be neglected or forgotten, it was found necessary to renew them by written Constitutions.

Hence it is in the German Ordinances of 1462 that we are to look for the first written laws regulating the subject of proprietary marks.

If we have no authentic documents which refer to this subject anterior to the 15th century, it is not because a system of giving and receiving marks, and a prescribed method of using them, did not exist anterior to that period, but because, to use the language of Bro. Findel,<sup>2</sup> it was only when the ancient forms had begun to fall into disuse, when the taste for forming leagues and confederacies was on the wane, and when the true comprehension of the signification of the ancient ritual, usages, and discipline was beginning to disappear, that the Masons felt the necessity of reviving the ancient landmarks and of giving them authority by written Constitutions.

Of these "ancient landmarks" not the least important was the

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<sup>1</sup> "Archæological Journal," vol. i., p. 383, note, cited by Mr. Pryor in the "Freemasons' Quarterly Review," 1845, p. 441.

<sup>2</sup> "History of Freemasonry" (Lyon's Translation), p. 73.



use by Stonemasons of proprietary marks, and hence we find that regulations for their government were not revived or re-established, but transferred from oral tradition to a written document, so that there might be no defense or palliation of a disobedience or infringement of them.

3. As we find this system of marks prevailing in Germany, in France, in England, and in Scotland, as well as in many other places, we have a right to infer that as the marks were often of the same form, the same system of regulations prevailed in all those countries.

4. The marks were not arbitrarily selected, and liable to be changed at the fancy or caprice of the owner, but were only obtained after laborious study of the principles of the Gothic art and adequate proofs of skill; and having been bestowed with some formal ceremony, however brief, the proprietor was not permitted at any time or for any cause to change the form or character of the mark, but was obliged always after its acceptance to retain it and to affix it to all stones which he fabricated with superior skill and care.

5. These marks were sometimes monogrammatic, sometimes geometrical, and sometimes symbolic, but, notwithstanding some few writers have entertained a contrary opinion, there is no authentic evidence that the choice of the character of the mark was governed by any rules which bestowed the marks with either of these characteristics upon different classes or ranks of the workmen. Yet it is not improbable that some such rules may have prevailed, though there is no documentary evidence extant of their existence. It must, however, be confessed that the fact that in Germany Apprentices were permitted, under certain circumstances, to employ the marks of their Masters, would seem to indicate that there could not have been any difference in the character of the marks used by different ranks of Masons.

6. In some cases proprietary marks were hereditary, and there are instances known where the son or the grandson has assumed the mark of his father or grandfather. But there does not seem to have been any law making such hereditary transmission obligatory. If the son adopted the mark of his father it was because he chose to do so, and he might, with perfect propriety, and most frequently did, select a different mark. All Statutes and Ordinances are silent on the subject.

Very intimately connected with this subject of proprietary marks is that of the Mark degree, which, whatever was the date and the place of its origin, was undoubtedly founded on and to be traced to the usages of the Operative Masons.

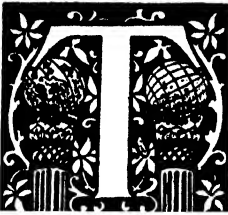
The fact of the existence of this degree, which continues the usage of marks in modern rituals, is another important link in the chain which connects the Operative Masonry of the Middle Ages with the Speculative Masonry of the present day.

As such it is entitled to due investigation, and it will therefore be made the subject of the succeeding chapter, though the continuity of our researches into the progress of mediæval Masonry will, by this course, be to some extent interrupted.

But I know no better plan than to let the history of Speculative Mark Masonry immediately and continuously follow that of Operative Mark Masonry. It is but the transfer from the treatment of a cause to that of its effect.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE MARK DEGREE



**H**ERE is no stronger or more convincing proof of the connection between the Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages and those of the present day, and of the regular descent of the one from the other, than that furnished by the existence in the modern rituals of a degree the ceremonies of which have been evidently founded on the system of proprietary marks which prevailed among the Stonemasons of Germany, and which passed from them into all the other countries of Europe.

If all the other authentic testimonies of the fact that about the beginning of the 18th century there was a transmutation of an Operative Art into a Speculative Science, were expunged from the record, the apparently extraordinary phenomenon that there exists in the latter, and in the latter only, a peculiar and extraordinary system, which also prevailed in the former, and in the former only, would be sufficient to warrant the conclusion that there must have been a very intimate relation between the two associations with which this system was connected.

Therefore, as a connecting link of that great chain which, beginning with the Roman Colleges of Artificers, extended to the early Masons of Gaul and Britain, to the Traveling Freemasons of Lombardy and Germany, and finally terminated in the Free and Accepted Masons of modern times, a thorough consideration of the rise and progress of the Mark degree must be deemed essential to the completeness of any work on the history of Freemasonry.

In pursuing this investigation it will be necessary to inquire, firstly, what is the position of the Mark degree in the modern rituals ; secondly, what is its character and legendary history ; and, thirdly, what was its real historical origin as distinguished from the mythical account of its fabrication, as it is given in its legends.

To an investigation of these important and, to the student of Masonic Antiquities, interesting, points, the present chapter will be devoted.

The Mark degree, or to define it more accurately according to the received phraseology, the degree of Mark Master, constitutes the fourth degree or the first of what are called the capitular degrees in the American Rite as it is practiced in the United States. In Scotland and Ireland it is a degree recognized under the jurisdiction of the Grand Chapter. In England it is not recognized by the Grand Lodge. The articles of Union, adopted in 1813, defined Ancient Craft Masonry to consist only of the first three degrees, including the Royal Arch. Hence, there being no place provided for the Mark degree, it was ignored in English Masonry until its introduction a few years ago, when it was placed under an independent jurisdiction called the Mark Grand Lodge, a body which was established in 1856.

On the Continent of Europe and in all countries the Freemasonry of which is not derived immediately from and is in intimate connection with the Masonry of England and America, the Mark degree is entirely unknown. There is not in any of the German, French, Italian, or Spanish rituals the slightest allusion to it.

In the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite the Mark degree at one time held a distinct position, though it has ever since the beginning of this century or the close of the last, been stricken from its ritual. Of this fact there is undeniable proof.

I have in my possession an original Warrant or charter, granted in the year 1804 by the Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem to American Eagle Master Mark Masons' Lodge No. 1, in Charleston, South Carolina, and there is in the archives of the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, the ritual of the degree as at the time conferred, which appears to have been only on Past Master Masons of the Scottish Rite who were recognized by the possession of Scottish degrees as Past Masters.<sup>1</sup>

There is no evidence, however, that other lodges were established

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<sup>1</sup> That is, on Master Masons who had received the preliminary degrees of the Scottish Rite, who were assumed in their own Rite to be Past Masters. In the Circular of the Charleston Supreme Council, issued in 1802, it is said that "throughout the Continent of Europe, England, Ireland, and the West Indies, every Sublime Mason is recognized as a lawful Past Master."

by the same authority. At least no other Charters have to my knowledge been discovered.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the establishment of the Supreme Council at Charleston, in 1801, the jurisdiction over the degree had probably been assumed by the Scottish Rite Masons, for the Warrant just mentioned was granted by the Council of Princes of Jerusalem, which was a body subordinate to the Supreme Council.

At the present time the Mark degree constitutes a part of the Rite practiced in the United States, and is under the jurisdiction of the Grand Chapter, being the fourth of the capitular degrees.

Up to nearly the middle of the present century the degree was conferred sometimes in a lodge working under the Warrant granted by the Grand Chapter to a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, and sometimes in a Mark Masters' lodge working under a special and distinct charter from the Grand Chapter. But in 1853 this system was abolished by the General Grand Chapter, and independent Mark Masters' lodges no longer exist in America.

In Scotland, after the transition of Operative into Speculative Masonry, the Mark degree was worked originally by a few lodges under their Craft Warrant, and it was then conferred as an appendage to the Fellow-Craft degree. This was done as late as 1860, by a lodge at Glasgow, which action, however, attracted the notice of the Grand Chapter, and having in conference with the Grand Lodge thoroughly investigated the subject, the following report was made, which as giving a summary of the rise and progress of the degree in Scotland, and of the changes of position to which it was subjected, is well worthy of quotation.

In this report it was unanimously agreed by the Committee of Conference "that what is generally known under the name of the Mark Master's degree was wrought by the Operative lodges of St. John's Masonry<sup>2</sup> in connection with the Fellow-Craft degree before the institution of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. That since that date it has continued to be wrought in the Old Operative lodges, but in what may be called the Speculative lodges, it was never worked at all—or at all events only in a very few. That this

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<sup>1</sup> The American Eagle Master Mark Masons' Lodge was in existence at least as late as 1807, and a list of its officers is given in the register published in that year by J. J. Negrin, and appended to his "Free Masons' Vocal Assistant," page 25.

<sup>2</sup> By St. John's Masonry is meant in Scotland the three symbolic degrees.

degree being, with the exception of the Old Operative lodges above mentioned, entirely abandoned by the lodges of St. John's Masonry, the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter assumed the management of it as the Fourth degree of Masonry, in order to complete the instruction of their candidates in the preliminary degrees, before admitting them to the Royal Arch. And, finally, that this degree, whether viewed as a second part of the Fellow-Craft degree or as a separate degree, has never been recognized or worked in England, Ireland, or the Continent, or in America, as a part of St. John's Masonry."

It was also stated by a delegate of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, at a conference on the subject of the Mark degree, held at London in 1871, that long anterior to the institution of the Grand Lodge of Scotland two classes of lodges existed in that kingdom; namely, those which worked only the First and Second degrees and of which the Mark Master or Overseer was Master, and those which worked the First, Second, and Third degrees, over which the Master Mason presided.

In both of these statements there are errors in respect to the Mark degree, which have been corrected by subsequent investigations. Bro. Lyon, whose authority on this subject is unquestionable, says that the statements in regard to an organization for conferring the Mark under Mark Masters or Overseers are unsupported by any existing records. The lodges previous to the 18th century "knew nothing of the degrees of Mark Men, Mark Master, or Master Mason."<sup>1</sup>

As a degree of Masonry, in the sense which we give to the word degree, the system of Mark Masonry was wholly unknown to the Operative Masons of the Middle Ages. It has been shown that in Germany every Apprentice who had served his time, on being admitted as a Fellow Craft received a Mark, which was to be his unchangeably during his life. The reception of this was generally accompanied by a banquet, furnished to a certain extent of expenditure by the lodge which admitted him; but there is not the slightest allusion in any document extant to the fact that the bestowal of the mark was accompanied by esoteric ceremonies which would give it the slightest resemblance to a degree.

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 71.

In Scotland the Statutes of William Schaw required all Fellows, and sometimes Apprentices, to select their marks, which were to be recorded, and a fee was paid for their registration ; but as Bro. Lyon says, there is not anything in the records of the period which points to a special ceremony in connection with their adoption.

In England preceding the middle of the 18th century we have nothing in reference to marks in the Old Charges or to the Mark degree in the minutes of lodges, either in Operative or Speculative Masonry.

We are indebted to Bro. Hugban, that indefatigable investigator, for the earliest authentic record we possess of the existence of the Mark degree in Scotland. It is contained in an extract from the minutes of the Operative lodge at Banff, the date of which is January 7, 1778. The minute is in the following words :

“That in time coming all members that shall hereafter raise to the degree of Mark Mason, shall pay one mark Scots, but not to obtain the degree of Mark Mason before they are passed Fellow-Craft. And those that shall take the degree of Mark Master Masons shall pay one shilling and sixpence sterling into the Treasurer for behoofe of the lodge. None to attain to the degree of Mark Master Mason until they are raised Master.”

From this record we learn that at that time there were two degrees in connection with the mark—one called “Mark Mason,” probably the same which was distinguished elsewhere as “Mark Man,” to which degree Fellows were eligible, and another called “Mark Master Mason,” which was conferred only on Master Masons.

We are not, however, to ascribe the year 1778, the date of the record, as the date of the institution of either of the degrees. The minutes only prove that the degrees were then in existence, and show the regulation by which they were governed.

Their fabrication must have taken place at an earlier period, but how much earlier we are unable to say. But I imagine that we would be safe in saying that neither of the degrees was fabricated anterior to the middle of the 18th century. If earlier, some notice of them would occur in the minutes of the Lodges of Mary's Chapel and Kilwinning. But those minutes have been thoroughly digested by Bro. Lyon, and no such notice has been met with.

The earliest mention of the two Mark degrees in England is

found in the Minute Books of St. Thomas Lodge No. 142 in London.

The minutes of the lodge in connection with this subject were transcribed by Bro. H. C. Levander, Secretary of the lodge, and are contained in a letter from Bro. T. B. Whytehead, Past Master of York Mark Lodge, which was inserted in the Report of the Committee on Correspondence to the Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania, and published in the proceedings of that body for the year 1879. From the minutes of the lodge, of August 14, 1777, we are put in possession of important facts bearing on this subject. The minute is as follows :

"August 14, 1777.

"Regular Lodge night, the W. M., the Wardens, the Secretary, and Treasurer present worked in the First and Second degrees, made the following brothers Mark Masons and also Mark Master Masons, opened at 6 o'clock."

From this and from other minutes of the lodge of subsequent date but of the same purport, we glean the facts that in 1777, and no doubt earlier (the lodge was warranted in 1775), the two degrees of Mark Man and Mark Master were worked in the South of England as an appendage to the Fellow-Craft's degree.

The Lodge of St. Thomas received its Warrant from the Grand Lodge of "Ancients," or Athol Grand Lodge, which held close and amicable relations with the Grand Lodge of Scotland. But there is also evidence that at a later period, the Mark degree was worked by an English lodge holding its Warrant from the Grand Lodge of "Moderns," or the legitimate Grand Lodge of England, though that body religiously repudiated all degrees except the three symbolic degrees.

Bro. Whytehead, in the article before referred to, supplies us with an extract from the minutes of the Imperial George Lodge of Middleton in Lancashire, which had been warranted in 1752 by the Grand Lodge of "Moderns." The minute is dated March 9, 1809, and is in these words :

"This lodge was opened in due form at 8 o'clock, in peace and good harmony.

"When the following Brethren were made Mark Masons."

Bro. Whytehead also cites the Directory of Minerva Lodge



No. 250 at Hull, as showing that in the year 1802 that lodge conferred, besides several other degrees, those of "Ark, Mark, and Link."

Though there was no regular book of the Mark Lodge, yet the Secretary, Bro. M. C. Peck, states that the marks were entered in the Craft minute book.

In Kenning's *Masonic Cyclopædia*, Bro. Woodford says: "It is undoubtedly true that in Scotland the 'Falows of Craft' took up their marks, but we are not aware, so far, of any corresponding use in England."<sup>1</sup>

But the records of St. Thomas Lodge of Lancashire in 1775 and of Minerva Lodge of Yorkshire in 1809, marks were regularly selected and recorded by brethren when they received the Mark degree. The mark was always appended to the name of the brother.

So that if, by the expression "Taking up their marks," of which, he says, there was no "corresponding use in England," he means that the English Mark Masons did not select and register their marks, just as they did in Scotland, these records show that he is clearly in error.

Bro. Woodford also says, in the same article, "Mark Man, in our humble opinion, is historically synonymous with Mark Mason."

But the same records prove that in 1775 the degree of Mark Man was distinct from that of Mark Master, though in 1809 the Minerva Lodge does not appear to have practiced the former.

Whether we call the first of these degrees Mark Man or Mark Mason, and the latter Mark Mason or Mark Master Mason, the words Mark Man and Mark Mason, in the meaning given to them at the present day, are not synonymous, and never could have been, because they indicate two distinct things.

These minutes also show that in the 18th century the Mark degree was worked independently by certain Blue lodges under their Grand Lodge Warrants. It was, however, rejected as a degree, or rather not recognized by the United Grand Lodge, in the articles of union adopted in 1813. It has, however, always been recognized in Scotland and in Ireland as a part of Speculative Masonry necessarily preparatory to the Royal Arch.

The Mark degree was introduced into the United States at a

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<sup>1</sup> Kenning's "Cyclopædia," in voce. Mark Man, p. 453.

time subsequent to the middle of the last century. In the sparseness of authentic documents, it is impossible to affix the precise date of the introduction of the Mark degree into America, but it would be, I think, more correct to place that date at about the close rather than immediately after the middle of the century. "Independent Mark Lodges," says Bro. Hughan,<sup>1</sup> "were scattered throughout the United States of America during the latter part of the last century and early in the present one." This, I have no doubt, as the result of my own investigations, is the proper date of the introduction of the degree in this country.

The late Bro. F. G. Tisdall, who was the Master of St. John's Lodge No. 1 in the city of New York, asserted in an address delivered at the Centennial of the lodge, in 1857, that the lodge received its original Warrant from the Grand Lodge of England in the year 1757, under the Grand Mastership of Lord Aberdour, and that to its Warrant was "annexed a Warrant with power to make Mark Masons."

If this assertion were true it would establish two important historical facts: first, that the Mark degree was recognized in the middle of the last century by the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), and secondly, that it was practiced at the same period in the United States.

Unfortunately, Bro. Tisdall has verified neither of these statements by authentic documents, and we are compelled to relegate them to the regions of the mythical, where so many hundreds of hap-hazard statements of Masonic history have found at last a quiet resting-place.<sup>2</sup>

He has, however, cited an extract from the minutes which shows that in the year 1796 there was a Mark lodge, connected in some way with the Craft Lodge, St. John, and that at that time the Mark degree was conferred by it.<sup>3</sup>

It must be admitted as a well-proven historical fact that Mark

<sup>1</sup> Mackey's "National Freemason," February, 1873, vol. ii., p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> In the article just cited from Mackey's "National Freemason," Bro. Hughan has written an able criticism on the address of Bro. Tisdall as well as some Essays on the same subject published by Tisdall in Pomeroy's "Democrat." Hughan has very conclusively proved that the claims of Tisdall for so early an existence in America of the Mark degree have no historical foundation.

<sup>3</sup> The minute reads as follows: "The accounts of St. John's Mark Lodge No. 1, made up to December 23, 1796, show a balance due to the treasury of £3 18s."

lodges existed in America and that the Mark Master's degree was conferred at the earliest about the close of the last century.

It was most probably introduced from Scotland or from the Athol Grand Lodge of England. St. John's Lodge of New York, already mentioned, though it was originally warranted by the Grand Lodge of "Moderns," afterward attached itself to the Grand Lodge of New York which was established by the "Ancients" under the Duke of Athol in 1781. It will be remarked, as has been proven by Bro. Hughan, that notwithstanding the assertion of Tisdall, there is no mention in the records of a Mark lodge or of the Mark degree in the records, until after it became connected with the "Ancients."

Though it is probable that in America, as in Scotland and in England, the Mark Master's degree was conferred in connection with Craft lodges, we learn by authentic testimonies that it was about the beginning of the present century, perhaps a few years earlier, conferred in Mark lodges, which seem to have been under the charge of Chapters.

Webb, in the 1812 edition of his *Freemason's Monitor*, records two Mark lodges as existing in Rhode Island and seventeen in New York. The Grand Chapters of both of these states were organized in 1798. But there were Royal Arch Chapters in existence before this date, and Mark lodges also.

The first constitution adopted in 1798 by the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the Northern States of America, which body afterward became the General Grand Chapter of the United States, recognized the Mark Master Mason's degree as a part of its system of degrees. The Constitutions adopted in 1799 expressly provided for the granting of warrants to hold Mark Master Masons' Lodges separately.

For a long time afterward Mark lodges were held generally in the bosom of the Chapters and under Chapter Warrants, and sometimes in distinct lodges under Warrants issued by the State Grand Chapters. Perhaps the last of these was St. John's Mark Lodge No. 1, in the city of Charleston, South Carolina.

But in the year 1856 the General Grand Chapter abolished independent Mark lodges, and ever since the degree has been conferred in a lodge working in the bosom of a Chapter and under the Chapter Warrant.

The theory entertained by some that the Mark degree was introduced into America by the Masons of the Scottish Rite, founded on the isolated fact that in the year 1803 a Mark lodge had been warranted in the city of Charleston by the Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem, is wholly untenable. It is more probable that the jurisdiction over the degree was assumed in that case by the Council, the degree having existed long before in this country, whither it had been brought from Scotland and England through Charters issued for the establishment of subordinate lodges of Craft Masons.

The Mark degree appears, indeed, to have been something of a waif floating on the waters—a sort of flotsam and jetsam—without any lawful owner, and claimed and seized sometimes by Royal Arch Chapters, sometimes by Craft lodges, sometimes by independent Mark lodges, and lastly by the Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. The degree was traveling about during the close of the last and the beginning of the present century like Marryat's "Japhet," in search of a father. Fortunately, it has at last found a parent in Scotland, Ireland, and this country, in the Grand Chapter, which has assumed the paternity. In England, maternal relations are exercised by the Grand Mark Lodge, which is nursing the bantling until such time as the Grand Chapter shall acknowledge a fatherhood.

From this indicative sketch of the position occupied by Mark Masonry in the series of Masonic grades, we pass to a consideration of its legend—that mythical history fabricated at the time of its adoption, as a part of the system of Speculative Masonry.

In pursuing our further investigations in this way we necessarily abandon the functions of the historian and assume those of the fabulist. Yet the investigation is of great importance, for the fact of the direct descent of Speculative Masonry from the Operative art practiced by the mediæval builders, is by no circumstance more clearly and positively proved than by the modification of the system of Marks peculiar to the latter, which was invented by the former.

This modification was, however, a very important one. The practice of using proprietary Marks, which was in use among the Operative Masons of the Middle Ages, and which lasted longer in Scotland than in any other country, undoubtedly suggested to the Speculative Masons the thought which resulted in the fabrication of

the Mark degree. At first the idea of a proprietary mark may have occurred to the inventors of the different legends. If so, it gradually became obsolescent, and at this day the Mark of a Speculative Mark Master bears in its accepted character and use a much nearer resemblance to the *tessera hospitalis* of the Ancients than to the proprietary mark of an Operative Mason of the Middle Ages. To this particular point I shall have occasion hereafter to revert.

As the government of the Mark degree differed in different countries and at different times, so the legend seems also to have varied, and we find several forms of it in the rituals of the degree.

In the middle of the last century, or a little later, when in Scotland and in England the Mark system was divided into two grades or ranks, that of Mark Man and that of Mark Master, the design of the Mark was supposed to be very different from that of indicating a proprietorship.

The duty of the Mark Men is said in the ritual to have been to examine the materials as they came out of the hands of the workmen, and then to place a Mark upon them so as to enable them to be put together with greater facility and precision when brought from the quarries, the forest, and the clay-grounds to the city of Jerusalem. These marks were mathematical figures, name squares, levels, and perpendiculars which were used by command of King Solomon.

The Mark Masters were to examine the materials when they were brought to the Temple to see that every part duly corresponded, and thus to prevent confusion and mistake in fitting the respective parts to their proper places.

In doing this they were, of course, guided by the marks which had been placed upon the stones and other materials by the Mark Men. The Mark Masters then placed an additional Mark upon them to show that they approved the work which had been previously examined by the Mark Men.

In all this there is not the slightest notion of a proprietorship. The stones were marked by the mediæval Mason, so that the work of each man might be identified and he be made responsible for its imperfection or receive due credit for its merit.

But the stones and timbers were not according to this legend marked for any such purpose by the workmen, who "hewed, cut, and squared" them. The Mark was placed upon them by the Mark

Masters, who superintended the Masons and carpenters in the quarries and the forests, and who placed a Mark on each stone and timber so that when transported to Jerusalem, the Mark Masters would find no difficulty, when guided by these Marks, in placing those materials together which were intended to be in juxtaposition.

Such a system prevails at the present day among stonemasons, carpenters, and joiners, so as to point out precisely the positions to be occupied by the different parts of the work upon which they are engaged when they are to be put together.

But this is altogether different from the system of proprietary Marks which was pursued by the Operative Masons of the Middle Ages.

There was another legend introduced at a later period, for the preliminary degree of Mark Man appears to have been omitted by that time from the system. It was most probably the ritual practiced in this country before the close of the last century. It is that which was used by the Mark lodge in Charleston, which had been chartered in 1804 by the Grand Council of Princes of Jerusalem. We have every reason to believe that this was the ritual used at that time by the Mark lodges in America, from whom the Charleston Mark lodge must have received it, as there is no other source known from which it could have been derived.

The legend in this ritual differs very materially from the former, which has been just described. There is no longer a pretension that the Mark was used as a means of indicating that two distinct pieces of material were when brought together to be put in juxtaposition. That idea has now been entirely eliminated from the degree.

In this more modern legend, the Mark is said to have been used for two purposes. In the first place, Hiram Abif, seeing that it was impossible to superintend so large a number of workmen as were employed in the building of the Temple, appointed overseers to the different classes. He was careful to select only men of irreproachable character for this responsible office.

He was particularly attached to the Giblemites or Stonecutters, whom he formed into a body, whose duty it was, as overseers, to procure from the Treasurer-General such sums of money as were necessary to pay off the workmen over whom they presided, which was done at a particular time and in a particular place.

To expedite the task of payment, and to prevent confusion and imposition among the workmen, the Giblemites were ordered to provide for themselves a particular Mark by which they and the amount due to each one were easily recognized ; and presenting this Mark in a particular manner, each Mark Master received at once the wages due to him.

But the Mark thus selected was to be used not on the stone as a proof of who was the cutter of the stone, but only as a jewel to be employed at the hour of paying wages, so that the paymaster might commit no error in the payment.

But the Mark was used also for another purpose. This purpose was one utterly unknown to the Operative Masons or to the Speculative Masons who first founded the degree.

A Mark Master being in distress or danger, has a talisman for relief in his Mark. He sends it, says the ritual, to a Mark Mason, who instantly obeys the summons and flies to his relief with a heart warmed with the impulse of brotherly love.

The Mark might also be put in pledge if the owner was "in the utmost distress ;" and he was to redeem it as soon as it should be in his power.

In this way the Mark of the Speculative Masons began to cease to bear any analogy to that of the Operative Stonecutters whence it was originally derived. It was no longer a device placed by a builder upon the stone which he had wrought, and the proprietorship of which he by this token claimed—not a proprietorship in the material, but in the workmanship with which his skill had fitted it for the building.

In the first ritual of the Mark degree, adopted at the time, most probably, of its institution, though this design of a proprietary Mark was not exactly observed, still the Speculative Mark referred to an architectural purpose, that of indicating the proper position of the materials.

There was enough of analogy to the Operative preserved by the Speculative Mark to indicate and to clearly prove the one was the outcome of the other.

But now all analogy or resemblance to the operative art was obliterated, and the more recent Mark Masters began to look outside of the Craft of Operative Masons for characteristics to apply to the Mark. It became to him, as it is called in the ritual quoted

above, a "talisman," a means of obtaining relief, either by summoning with it a brother Mark Master to his assistance, or by pledging it to obtain the loan of money.

In plain words it ceased to have any relation to the proprietary mark of the Cologne and Strasburg Masons, and found its true analogy in the *tessera hospitalis* of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

The *tessera hospitalis*, or "hospitable die," was a piece of bone, of stone, or ivory, or any other material. It was a custom among the ancients that when two persons became allied as friends, they took such a die, which they divided into two parts, each one inscribing his name upon one of the halves, which were then interchanged. The Scholiast on Euripides says that if at any future period either needed assistance, on showing his broken half of the die to the other the required aid was, if possible, granted.

Plautus, the Roman dramatist, gives an interesting instance of the use of the *tessera* in the interview between Agorastocles and his unknown uncle, Hanno, described in the play of "Poenulus."

"Hanno. Hail, my countryman.

"Agorastocles. Whosoever thou art, I hail thee also in the name of Pollux. If thou needest anything, speak, I beseech thee, and ask it for the sake of thy country.

"Hanno. I thank thee, but I have a lodging here. Show me, if you know him, Agorastocles, the son of Antedamas. Knowest thou here a certain youth called Agorastocles?

"Agorastocles. If thou art looking for the adopted son of Antedamas, I am the one thou art seeking.

"Hanno. Ha! what do I hear?

"Agorastocles. That I am the son of Antedamas.

"Hanno. If this be so, compare with me, if thou pleasest, the hospitable die (*tessera hospitalis*); here it is, I have brought it with me.

"Agorastocles. Come then, let me see it; it is the exact counterpart of that which I have at home.

"Hanno. Much I greet thee, oh, my friend! for thy father, Antedamas, thy father, I say, was bound to me by the ties of hospitality. This hospitable die (*tessera hospitalis*) was in common with him and me.

"Agorastocles. Therefore thou shalt lodge with me. For I



deny neither the rights of hospitality nor Carthage where I was born."<sup>1</sup>

The early Christians also had their *tessera*, which they carried about in their journeys from one place to another as a means of introduction to their fellow-Christians whom they might meet. Dr. Mason Harris, in a dissertation on this subject, says that the use of these *tessera* in the place of written certificates of character lasted until the 11th century.

It is very evident that the fabricator of the Mark ritual which we are considering was well acquainted with the nature of these Greek, Roman, and Christian *tessera*, and that they suggested to him the idea of transmuting the proprietary Mark of the Operative Masons which had given origin to the Mark degree from a token of ownership in the work of the stone to a badge of fraternity, and a means of claiming brotherly assistance.

In the early part of the present century, perhaps even much earlier, the ritual was again changed, and that form adopted which being either invented or approved by Thomas Smith Webb, the most prominent ritual maker of his day, is now the form universally practiced in this country.

The legend attached to this ritual enters into several details not embraced in the former ones, but it continues to maintain the theory that the Mark is a token of friendship, a theory which I have already said a dozen times was utterly unknown to the old Operative Masons.

The legend is to this effect. At the building of the Temple of Solomon, a young craftsman found in the quarries a stone of a peculiar form and beauty, and on which was inscribed certain mystical characters the meaning of which was wholly unknown to him. Nevertheless, he carried it up to the inspectors of the materials brought up for the construction of the temple, and disingenuously but unsuccessfully attempted to pass it off as a stone wrought by himself. Some time afterward this very stone, which had been prepared by Hiram Abif, for a special purpose in the building, was found to be wanting. After a strict search it was discovered among the rubbish and applied to its original destination. In honor of

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<sup>1</sup> Plautus, "Poenulus," Act V., Scene 2, ver. 80.

Hiram Abif, who had constructed the stone and placed his own mark upon it, a representation of this stone in gold or silver is used as the decoration of the degree ; it is worn by Mark Masters, and the traditional mark of Hiram being a circle of letters, each brother is directed to select his own mark and place it within the circle. This mark is inscribed by the lodge in its register or Book of Marks. The representation of it in metal is often, but not always, nor by any obligation, worn upon his person. It is sometimes used when in distress as a means of obtaining aid and relief.

To be more precise in the description : the American ritual requires the jewel, as it is called, to be " made of gold or silver, usually of the former metal (sometimes of a precious stone, as opal or agate), and in the form of a keystone. On the obverse or front surface the device or mark selected by the owner must be engraved within a circle composed of the letters H.T.W.S.S.T.K.S. On the reverse surface the name of the owner, of his chapter, and the time of his advancement to the degree may be inscribed, though this is not legally necessary.

In Scotland the usage is a little different. The jewel must be of mother-of-pearl and wedge-shaped. In a circle on one side are the Hebrew letters **ש א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת** ; on the other side are letters conveying the same meaning in the vernacular language with the wearer's mark in the center.<sup>1</sup>

In this ritual and legend, as in the preceding one, the Mark has altogether lost the proprietary character which it had among the Craft in the Middle Ages. It has become a Masonic decoration and a means of proving the claims of its owner to certain prerogatives peculiar to Mark Masters.

In one point, however, all the legends agree. Each fixes the time and place of instituting the degree at the building of Solomon, and they attribute the establishment of the regulations which then governed it to the wisdom and foresight of Hiram Abif, though according to the most modern ritual, the circumstances which are commemorated in the ceremony of initiation occurred after the death of that distinguished artist.

As the result of our investigation, I think that we are forced to come to the conclusion that the Mark degree first made its ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Laws of the Supreme Grand Chapter of Scotland, cap. vii., 4.

pearance in Speculative Masonry about the middle of the 18th century. We can find no records in which such a degree is mentioned previous to that period.

In a report made to the Grand Lodge of Mark Masons of England in 1873, it is said, with a great deal more of boldness than of accuracy, that "there is probably no degree in Freemasonry that can lay claim to greater antiquity than those of Mark Man or Mark Mason and Mark Master Mason." It is a very great pity, for it is vastly detrimental to the intelligent study of Masonic history, that men otherwise accurate and trustworthy should indulge in such fanciful speculations. To say nothing of the Fellow-Craft and Master's degrees which antedate all allusions to Mark degrees by about half a century, all the degrees of the Chevalier Ramsay's system and many other high degrees were known and practiced at a time when Mark Masonry as a Speculative degree or degrees had been unheard of.

There can not, I think, be any doubt that Scotland was the place where the Mark degree was instituted. "It is to Scotland," says Bro. Whytehead (in the letter heretofore cited), "that we must look for the birthplace of the Mark degree as a Speculative working ;" and he feels sure that the degree "came into working existence toward the close of the last century, when there was a rage for the multiplication of Orders."

In both of these opinions I concur, except that I would prefer to make the time of birth about the middle, rather than toward the close, of the last century. But in either way the difference would not be much more than a score of years.

We must also, I am sure, ascribe the fabrication of the degree to suggestions derived from the use of proprietary marks by the Freemasons of Germany, whence they were introduced into Scotland. There they remained long after they had ceased to be employed in other countries.

It has been shown that in Operative Masonry the Mark was bestowed upon the Fellow-craft or sometimes upon the Apprentice, unaccompanied with any other ceremonial than that of a modest banquet in Germany at the expense of the lodge, and that of a registration of the mark in Scotland at the expense of the candidate.

Notwithstanding this, when the inclination to create a new degree in Speculative Masonry took possession of the minds of cer-

tain Scottish Masons, the very fact that the Mark was bestowed without any ceremonial, inspired the thought that this manifest want of any formality in the bestowal might be well supplied by the fabrication of a degree in which the ceremony might take place.

Whytehead supposes, but I can not agree with him, that "it may have even been the case that originally some kind of Mark working, though, of course, not the same as at present, once formed an integral part or complement of the Second degree, just as some Masons imagine the Royal Arch did of the Third degree, and that for the sake of abbreviating the ceremonies both were divorced and fashioned into separated and distinct workings under newly invented names."

But it is not necessary to indulge in any such supposition, which, besides, is not sustained by the records. The mere fact that there was in Operative Masonry a Mark, which every Fellow received upon his admission to the Craft and preparatory to his going to work as a journeyman, would have been sufficient to suggest to an inventive genius the most fitting points of a new degree, at a time when the manufactory of degrees had been established as a popular and successful branch of business in Speculative Masonry.

Notwithstanding that the use of proprietary Marks by the German and Scottish Operative Masons had furnished the suggestion for the invention of a degree in Speculative Masonry, the fabricators of that degree did not strictly preserve the system by which the use of Marks had always been regulated, which was simply to each stonecutter the means of identifying the stones which he had cut.

I do not believe that the Mark was employed simply to give the Overseers and Masters of the works a ready means of calculating the amount of pay due to each workman. Nothing of this is to be found in any of the old statutes or regulations.

Besides, the Mark was not placed on all stones indiscriminately, and if the calculation of wages was made by the marked stones only, the workmen would be constantly defrauded of a part of their dues.

It was a regulation that those stones only should be marked which were of importance in the building and which required skill and dexterity in their construction.

The inscribing of a Mark on a well-cut and polished stone was rather intended to secure to the stonecutter a just reputation for his

work than to enable an overseer to calculate the amount of wages which were due.

If I am correct in my views, the Masons placed their Marks upon the stones which they cut in the same spirit in which the early printers affixed, each one, a peculiar device on the title-pages of the books which were issued from his press.<sup>1</sup>

It is evident from what has been here said that the design of the Mark has been greatly changed in its adoption by the Speculative Masons from that of the Operative Builders, from whom, however, the former derived it.

In one respect the various rituals of Mark Masonry agree, without the slightest variation. They all placed the institution of the system of giving Marks to a portion of the Craft at the time of building King Solomon's Temple, and the legend connects them with Hiram Abif, whose supposed personal Mark, surrounding that of the wearer, constitutes the decoration of the degree of Mark Master according to the modern ritual.

I need hardly say that this story of the Temple origin of the Mark degree is a mere myth, having no more foundation in history than the Hiram legend of the Third degree.

Its adoption in the Mark Master's degree is, however, a conclusive proof that that degree in Speculative Masonry was fabricated after the invention of the Third degree, in the first quarter of the 18th century.

In conclusion, as it has been shown that the Mark of the modern Speculative Freemason was evidently suggested by that of the German and especially the Scottish Operative Masons, and as the employment of Marks by the latter has evidently suggested their adoption by the Mark Masters when fabricating their degree, so I may repeat what was said in the beginning of this chapter, that there is no stronger or more convincing proof of the connection between the Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages and the Speculative Freemasons of the present day, and of the direct descent of the latter from the former, than that which is furnished by the Mark Master's degree.

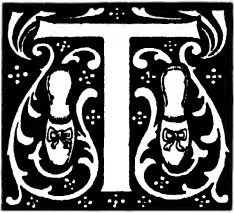
<sup>1</sup> Some of these old printers' devices bear a very striking resemblance to the stone-cutters' marks. That resembling an inverted 4 is very common to both. See Fosbrook's "Encyclopædia of Antiquities," p. 445, or the title-page of any old book.

But we must be careful to repudiate as simply a myth of modern origin, the notion that there was ever a Mark degree before the middle or toward the close of the last century.

Still the Mark degree, though it has no antiquity, has its historical value as a factor in determining the true origin of the Speculative system, no investigation of which could be correctly or usefully conducted without a due consideration of the modern Mark degree.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### TRANSITION FROM OPERATIVE TO SPECULATIVE FREEMASONRY



THE history of the institution of Freemasonry is naturally divided into two distinct yet closely connected periods. The first period embraces the history of Operative Freemasonry; the second that of Speculative Freemasonry.

But the first of these periods did not pass at once and, as it were, by a leap into the second. The change which took place was a gradual one. The steps which led from the one to the other were almost imperceptible. The progress was slow and gradual. There was a time when all Freemasonry was purely Operative, and there was a time when it became solely Speculative. We have abundant facts to prove this statement. But it is impossible from any records in our possession to define the precise epoch when the change took place.

The naturalist with all the science in his possession is at a loss to determine the precise limits which bound the different kingdoms of nature. The mineral passes by an imperceptible gradation into the vegetable, and the highest species of the vegetable assimilate with a remarkable likeness of organization to the lowest tribes of the animal kingdom. It requires even in this advanced state of science, the largest amount of professional knowledge and experience to determine in certain instances to which division of nature certain specimens rightly belong.

So in the history of the Masonic institution, there are well-marked eras in its annals when we are at no loss to define the distinctive character of its workings. There are again points on the extreme limits of its two periods, when the Operative and the Speculative elements are so intimately connected and clash so confusedly together, like the prismatic colors of the spectrum, that it becomes extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to define the precise line of demarcation.

Thus we know with certainty that the Freemasonry of the 12th century, which had penetrated every country of the Continent of Europe, was wholly Operative, without a particle of the Speculative element in it ; we know, too, that the Freemasonry of the 19th century, which prevails over the whole civilized world, is entirely Speculative and has ceased to have any social connection with the Operative Craft.

But at what precise period the Operative art ceased to form a part of the institution of Freemasonry, and when the Speculative science threw off all connection with it, are historical questions which admit hardly of a possible conjecture, certainly not of any positive solution.

A great difficulty which we encounter in the discussion of this subject is that the change from one to the other branch began to assume a distinct form in different countries at different periods.

Thus, in London, Speculative Freemasonry had assumed a distinct and independent form many years before the lodges of Scotland had divested themselves of the Operative influence, and even in the same kingdom there were English lodges in the provinces which mingled Operative and Speculative Freemasonry in their work, long after the former system had been wholly abandoned by the lodges in the Metropolis.

Though it is probable that most readers understand the distinction between Masonry and Freemasonry, it may be well to impress that distinction upon their minds, that during this investigation they may perfectly appreciate the train of reasoning that is pursued.

Masonry is merely the art of building. It has existed from the earliest historic times, when men began to need places of shelter from the inclemency of the seasons, and must continue to exist so long as they require houses for their habitation. With its history we have no concern.

Freemasonry is the art of building connected in its practical operations with a Guild organization. It was always a confraternity or corporation constructed on the plan of a guild, and maintaining throughout all its progress that idea derived first from the Roman Colleges of Artificers, until finally it was merged in the non-operative system of Freemasonry, which exists at the present day and whose history it is the object of the present work to treat.

This distinction, it will be remembered, never ceased to be main-



tained by the Operative Freemasons, who always held themselves aloof as a higher class from the lower body of "rough masons" who were not "free" of the guild.

In pursuing our researches into that indefinable period during which the Operative organization was slowly advancing to a transformation into a Speculative society, it will be necessary that we should first thoroughly understand one of the characteristics which marked the Freemasons of the Middle Ages, and which rendered them unlike every other class of contemporary craftsmen.

This was the admission into their ranks and into full fraternity with them of non-professional persons, whose only claim to a connection with the craft was derived from their learning, their rank, or their wealth, which gave them the means of elevating the character and promoting the interests of the fraternity.

We have seen the existence of the same system in the Roman Colleges of Artificers, who strengthened their corporations by the adoption of men of rank and political influence as Patrons.

The early Freemasons were patronized by the Church, and were engaged almost solely in the construction of religious edifices. Hence there was a close and friendly connection between them and the ecclesiastics of that period. Lodges were for the most part held in the vicinity and under the patronage of monasteries, and the monks were often architects and builders. At a later period, when the Freemasons became independent of monastic influence, the primitive alliance was not completely dissolved, and the clergy, especially in France, in Germany, and in England, were often admitted, though not professional Masons, into the corporation of the Craft. They were among the first of non-masons who received from Operative Lodges the compliment of honorary membership.

The result of thus securing the patronage of bishops and other high ecclesiastics was, of course, favorable to the interests of the corporations of workmen and was, to a great extent, the controlling motive with them, as it had previously been with the Roman Colleges, for introducing into their guild men who were not of the Craft.

It was seen in the 12th and 13th centuries, when the corporations, not only of Masons but of other crafts, having sought to exercise undue power in the cities, incurred the displeasure of the government. Many sanguinary contests ensued, with alternate successes. But

when the Emperors Frederick II. and Henry VII. of Germany sought to end them by abolishing the corporations of workmen, these associations had grown so strong that they were able to successfully resist the Imperial power.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Anderson, in the second edition of the *Book of Constitutions*, gives repeated instances of bishops, noblemen, and even kings, who were admitted to the privileges of the Craft and exercised authority over the Operative Masons as members and patrons of the guild. But as the accuracy of Anderson as an historian has ceased to be respected through the researches of modern scholars, his authority on this subject need not be pressed. Elias Ashmole, however, whose truthfulness and minuteness as an annalist has never been doubted, furnishes unquestioned instances in which he and other gentlemen had been made members of an Operative Lodge in the 17th century. Nor does he speak of these admissions as if they were of unusual occurrence. Indeed, he leads us, by his silence, to the contrary inference.

But it is in the annals of the lodges of Scotland that we find the most satisfactory history of the rise and progress of the custom of admitting persons who were not Operative Masons as members of the guild. For this we are indebted to the researches of Bro. Murray Lyon, whose *History of the Lodge of Edinburgh* is of invaluable use to the scholar who is seeking to trace the authentic history of Freemasonry outside and independent of its mythical elements. To that work I shall have constant occasion to refer in the course of this part of the present investigation.

Lyon says that the earliest authentic record of a non-operative being a member of a Masons' lodge is contained in a minute of the Lodge of Edinburgh under date of June 8, 1600, where John Boswell Laird, of Achinflek, is mentioned among the members of the lodge. His name with his mark is signed to the minute with the names and marks of twelve others who evidently were Operative Masons.<sup>2</sup>

But twelve years anterior to that, in 1598, we find that William Schaw, who was also a non-operative,<sup>3</sup> acted as Master of the Work,

<sup>1</sup> Lacroix, "Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance," tom. iii., Part I., art. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Lyon, "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Lyon thinks that there is no proof that he was an Operative Mason, and says there can be little doubt that he was an honorary member of the fraternity. "Hist.," p. 56.

and that a year afterward he signed his name to the supplementary statutes issued by him, as "Master of the Work, Warden of the Masons."

His predecessor in that office was a nobleman, and in his own time the Wardenship over the Masons in Aberdeen, Banff, and Kincardine was held by a country gentleman, the Laird of Udaught, which shows, says Lyon, "that it was not necessary that either appointment should be held by a Craftsman." But there is just reason for inferring that to hold such offices it was necessary to have honorary membership in the fraternity.

*At a later period in the 17th century the practice of admitting non-operatives appears to have begun to be common.*

In July, 1634, the Lodge of Edinburgh admitted as Fellow-Craft the following gentlemen: Lord Alexander, Viscount Canada, Sir Anthony Alexander, and Sir Alexander Strachan. The two first were sons of the Earl of Stirling, and the last a well-known public man in his time.

"These brethren," says Lyon, "seem from their subsequent attendance in the lodge to have felt an interest in its proceedings. In the month immediately succeeding their initiation they were present, and attested the admission of three Operative Apprentices and one Fellow of Craft. They attended three meetings of the lodge in 1635, one in 1636, and one in 1637. In signing the minute of their own reception each appends a mark to his name."<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the rest of the 17th century there are repeated records in the minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh of the admission of non-operatives to the rank of Fellow-Crafts and sometimes of Masters.

Thus, in 1637, David Ramsay, a "gentleman of the Privy Chamber," was admitted; in 1638, Henry Alexander, another son of the Earl of Stirling; in 1640, General Alexander Hamilton; in 1667, Sir Patrick Hume; and in 1670, the Right Honorable William Murray, son of Lord Balvaird, and Walter Pringle and Sir John Harper, both members of the Scotch Bar.

It is not necessary to cite any more instances to show that in the 17th century the practice existed of admitting non-operative persons into the brotherhood of the Craft. In the 18th century it had be-

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<sup>1</sup> Lyon, p. 86.

come so common as finally to give to the Speculative element a preponderance over the Operative in the fraternity.

The following remarks of Bro. Lyon on the subject of the admission of non-operatives into the membership of the Craft are of great value in connection with this subject:

"It is worthy of remark that with singularly few exceptions, the non-operatives who were admitted to Masonic fellowship in the Lodges of Edinburgh and Kilwinning during the 17th century were persons of quality, the most distinguished of whom, as the natural result of its metropolitan position, being made in the former lodge. Their admission to fellowship in an institution composed of operative Masons associated together for purposes of their craft, would in all probability originate in a desire to elevate its position and increase its influence, and once adopted the system would further recommend itself to the Fraternity, by the opportunities which it presented for cultivating the friendship and enjoying the society of gentlemen, to whom, in ordinary circumstances, there was little chance of their ever being personally known.

"On the other hand, non-professionals connecting themselves with the lodge by the ties of membership would, we believe, be actuated partly by a disposition to reciprocate the feelings which had prompted the bestowal of the fellowship, partly by curiosity to penetrate the arcana of the Craft, and partly by the novelty of the situation as members of a secret society and participants in its ceremonies and festivities."<sup>1</sup>

The members thus admitted received various designations, such as "Gentlemen Masons," "Theoretical Masons," "Geomatic Masons," and "Honorary Members." The use of these terms evidently shows that the Working Masons—the "Domestic Masons,"<sup>2</sup> as Lyon styles them—recognized that there was a very palpable dif-

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> The words domatic, used for an Operative Mason, and geomatic, for a Theoretic Mason, I have met with only in the work of Bro. Lyon. They are not to be found in the Scottish dictionary of Jamieson, nor in any English Dictionary from Phillips to Webster. Neither are they used in any of the old Constitutions, Scotch or English, nor have I encountered them in any Masonic work that I have read. Lyon derives domatic from the Latin *domus*, a house, and says it means "of or belonging to a house." Geomatic he derives from the Greek *gea*, land, and he says Geomatic Masons were "landed proprietors or men in some way or other connected with agriculture." I do not like the words. I like less the definitions, and still less the etymology.

ference between the two classes of members. It is well to remember this fact, as it supplies one of the motives for the result which afterward occurred in the complete separation of the Speculative from the Operative element.

The Scotch Constitutions of 1598 and 1599 were certainly constructed solely for the government of Operative Masons. Yet there is no prohibition, express or implied, of the admission of non-operatives as members of lodges. The fact that Schaw, the framer of the Constitutions, was himself present at a meeting of the Lodge of Edinburgh, where a non-operative took a part in the proceedings, shows that he did not view such admissions as illegal innovations on the usages and laws of the fraternity.

We are not without the requisite information as to the status of these "Honorary Members."

The form of initiation or admission must have differed in some respects from that prescribed for an Operative Mason. The presentation of an "essay" or Master-piece of work, as a trial of skill, must have been dispensed with in the case of candidates whose previous education and profession had not supplied them with the necessary mechanical knowledge.

"It can not now be ascertained," says Bro. Lyon, "in what respect the ceremonial preceding the admission of theoretical, differed from that observed in the reception of practical Masons; but that there was some difference is certain, from the inability of non-professionals to comply with the tests to which Operatives were subjected ere they could be passed as Fellows of Craft. The former class of entrants would, in all likelihood, be initiated into a knowledge of the legendary history of the Mason Craft, and have the Word and such other secrets communicated to them as was necessary to their recognition as brethren."<sup>1</sup>

At first they were not chargeable with admission fees; but in 1727, when an attempt was made to exclude them on account of this exemption, a fee of one guinea was exacted as entrance money. But this was done at so late a period that we may infer that exemption from fees was the usage with respect to all "Theoretic Masons," while the lodges were purely Operative in character.

Notwithstanding this exemption, Theoretic Masons were quali-

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<sup>1</sup> Lyon, "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 82.

fied to hold the highest office in the lodge. Lyon says that "for a time the occupancy of the chair alternated between the two grand classes into which its membership was divided. Though to Speculative concurrence the Operative section owed the more frequent possession of the coveted honor."<sup>1</sup>

In Scotland the Operatives and Speculatives do not appear to have lived always in peace and concord ; some jealousy seems to have existed at times, which finally culminated in the year 1727 in an attempt by the Operatives to exclude Theoretical Masons from the lodge. "Exclusion" is the word used by Lyon, by which I suppose he means not only the expulsion of the Theoretic Masons who had been already admitted, but also the discontinuance in future of the custom of admitting them.

The attempt did not succeed. Speculative Masonry was already the preponderating element in the lodges, which a few years afterward abandoned in Scotland, as they had long before done in England, the Operative character.

It is admitted that the earliest authentic record of the admission of "Gentlemen Masons" into the lodges of England, or in other words the introduction of the Speculative element, occurred in 1646, when Elias Ashmole, the celebrated antiquary, and Colonel Henry Mainwaring were made "Free-Masons" in a lodge at Warrington in Lancashire.

But it does not, by any means, follow, because this is the first recorded instance, that Theoretical Masons had not been admitted in England long before. But the records have not come down to us, because of the loss or disappearance of the ancient minute books of the English Operative lodges.

"Why," says Bro. W. J. Hughan, "so many minute books are still preserved in Scotland, dating long before the institution of the Grand Lodge, even some in the 17th century, and yet scarcely any are to be found in England, seems inexplicable."<sup>2</sup>

We have a right to presume, judging by the usages of the sister kingdom, that the initiation of Ashmole and Mainwaring in 1646 was not the introduction of a new custom, but only the continuation of an old one.

<sup>1</sup> Lyon, "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> "Masonic Sketches and Reprints," p. 19.

If we have not the names of those gentlemen who had previously been admitted to the fellowship of English lodges, it is because the records are not extant.

Many brave heroes, says the Roman poet, have lived before Agamemnon, but they have died unwept, because there was no poet to sing their deeds.

The same thing may be said of the corporations and lodges of France and Germany. Though the records are not extant, we have collateral evidence that in both of them, as well as in other countries of the Continent, Theoretical or Honorary Members were admitted among the Operative craftsmen.

We may therefore lay it down as an authentic historical statement, which if not supported in other places as in Scotland by positive testimony, is yet sustained by the strongest logical inference, that from the earliest period Speculative Masons who were not practical workmen, builders, or architects, began to be admitted into the ranks of the Operative Craft. As time passed on the number of these Speculatives increased, as in the nature of things must have occurred, until they predominated over the Operatives. Finally, when this predominance became sufficiently powerful, the control of Freemasonry passed into their hands, and as a necessary result the institution ceased to be Operative and became wholly Speculative in its character.

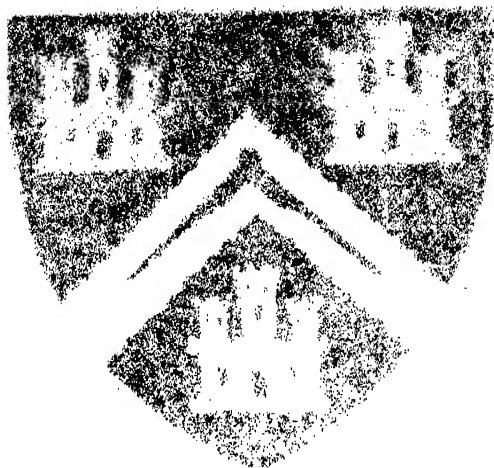
The terms "Gentleman Mason," "Theoretical Mason," and "Honorary Member," formerly employed to distinguish a non-Operative from an Operative, are no longer in use. For them has been substituted the word "Speculative." The thing itself was in existence long before the word which was to define it.

The first place in which we find the word Speculative in connection with Masonry is in the Cooke MS., whose conjectural date is about 1490. In this document it is said that the youngest son of King Athelstan, being a master of the Speculative science of geometry or masonry, added to it by his connection with the Craft of Masons' a knowledge of the practical science.<sup>1</sup>

It must be admitted, as Bro. Cooke says, that "no book or

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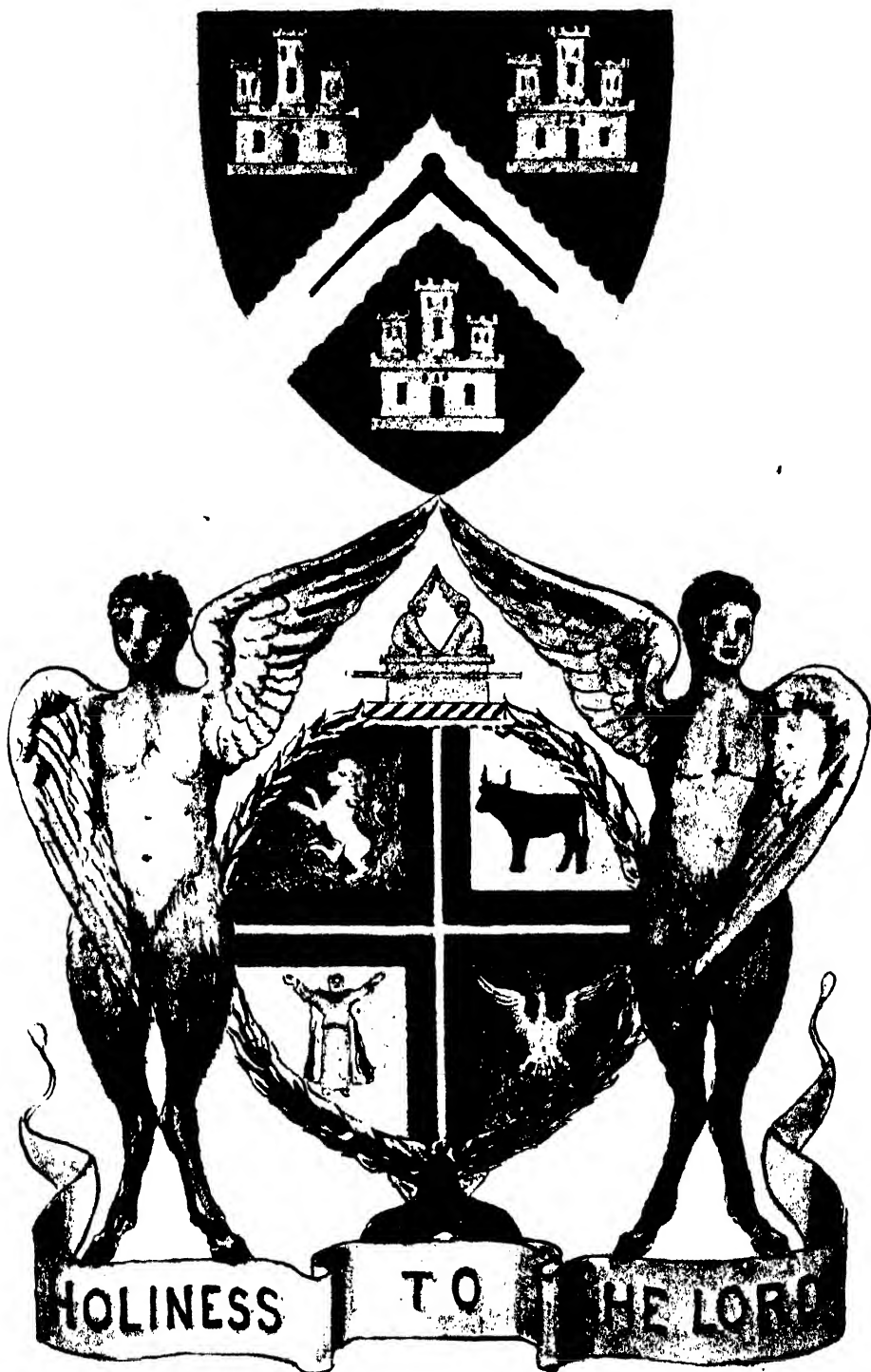
<sup>1</sup>He "lovyd well the sciens of Gemetry and he wyst well that hand craft had the practyke of the sciens of Gemetry so well as masons wherefore he drewe hym to consell and lernyd practyke of that sciens to his speculatyf. For of speculatyfe he was a master and he lovyd well masonry and masons."—Cooke MS., lines 615, 626.



*THE OLD ARMS OF THE OPERATIVE AND SPECULATIVE MASONS*







NAWAB SAIF-UD-DIN BAHADUR.



writing so early as this manuscript has yet been discovered in which Speculative Masonry is mentioned."<sup>1</sup> It is equally certain that the word appears to have been used in the sense given to it at the present day, and the writer of the manuscript drew a distinction between Practical or Operative and Speculative Masonry.

The word, however, is not repeated in any of the subsequent Constitutions, and we do not hear of it again until the time of Preston, who is the first to give its definition in these words :

"Masonry passes and is understood under two denominations; it is operative and speculative. By the former we allude to the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure derives figure, strength, and beauty, and whence result a due proportion and just correspondence in all its parts. By the latter we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity."<sup>2</sup>

The lexicographers define Speculative as opposed to Practical. Hence, "Speculative Masons," the term used at the present day, is precisely synonymous with "Theoretic Masons," the term which was applied by the Scotch Masons of the 16th and 17th centuries to those persons who were admitted into their lodges though they had no practical knowledge of the Operative art of building.

In contemplating that period in the history of Freemasonry when the institution was gradually preparing for the important change in its organization from an Operative Art to a Speculative Science, which period may be called, borrowing a term from the language of geology, the transition period, we must first properly appreciate what was its real condition just previous to the change.

In the first place, we find that before the present organization of Grand and Subordinate Lodges, the Society was an Operative one whose members were actually engaged in the manual labor of building, as well as in the more intellectual task of architecture or the designing of plans.

But not every man who was engaged in building or in handling stones was a member of this society or entitled to its privileges. In every country were two distinct and well-recognized classes of workmen.

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<sup>1</sup> Cooke MS., lines 615, 626, note K.

<sup>2</sup> Preston, "Illustrations of Masonry," 2d edit., p. 19. In subsequent editions he enlarged the phraseology without materially changing the sense.

In Germany the Craftsman (*Werkmann*) of the Corporation was distinguished from the *Maurer* or wall builder, the man who simply hewed and set stones. The Craftsman, the Stonecutter, was employed in the higher walks of the art. These Craftsmen formed a fraternity of themselves, and no workman was permitted to work with a Mason who was not a member, except under special circumstances which were provided for by the regulations. These facts are well authenticated in the Strasburg and other German Ordinances.

In France, the regulations of Etienne Boileau prescribe a similar difference between the Masons and Stonecutters who were members of the Corporation and those who were not. The former could employ the latter only as assistants and servants (*aides et vallis*), but were forbidden to instruct them in any of the secrets of the mystery or trade.

In Scotland the Masons of the Guild, who were called, certainly as early as the middle of the 17th century, Freemasons,<sup>1</sup> were distinguished from the Masons who were not "free of the Guild," and who were called "Cowans," a term which has been preserved in the ritual of modern Speculative Freemasonry with a similar meaning. With the Cowans the Freemasons were forbidden to work.

In England the distinction was between Masons or Freemasons and "Rough layers," and the same prohibition as to fellowship in labor prevailed there that did in other countries.

Though all were Operative workmen and all were engaged in the practical art of building, there was in every country a broad line of demarcation between the Freemasons who were instructed in the highest principles of the art and the lower class of Masons, who were without any pretension to a knowledge of the sciences of architecture and geometry which were cultivated by the higher class.

"Those only," said the Strasburg builders, with an excusable pride in their elevated position, "shall be Masters who can design and erect costly edifices and works for the execution of which they are authorized and privileged, nor shall they be compelled to work with any other craftsmen."<sup>2</sup>

But this higher class of Freemasons were, as we have already

<sup>1</sup> See Lyon's "History of the Lodge of Edinburgh," p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> "Strasburg Constitutions," art. 2.

seen, divided also into two classes, the Operative and the non-Operative members of the Guild, Corporation, or Fraternity.

It is not difficult to suppose how this division into two classes originally arose. In the earliest times of the society of Freemasons it was closely connected with and under the patronage of the Church. Among its practical members were often monks who were skilled in the manual labor of the Craft, and the architectural designs for the construction of Cathedrals and monasteries were often drawn by bishops or abbots who were well skilled in the theory of architecture. These sometimes from choice, and sometimes from necessity, in consequence of the intimate relations they held with it, became members of the Fraternity.

Subsequently, when the Operative Masons had released themselves from the rule of their ecclesiastical superiors and had established an independent brotherhood, they found it politic, if not positively necessary, to secure the patronage of wealthy nobles, and men of rank and science, who by their social position secured protection to the association and elevated its character.

The same process had occurred in the Roman Colleges of Artificers, from whose peculiar organization the Freemasons had derived the idea of their own.

Thus it happened that the Fraternity of Freemasons consisted from the very earliest period of its history of two classes, the Operative Masons who did the work, and the Theoretic, or, as we now call them, the Speculative Masons.

The word "Speculative," as has been already shown, is of very modern origin. If the single passage in the Cooke MS. be excepted, it is never met with in any Masonic writing until after the organization of Grand Lodges.

I use it, in the present work, as a mere matter of convenience, because it is most familiar to the general reader as a recent synonym of the old word "Theoretic."

Thus there always existed, we may say, from the earliest times, so far as we can trace authentic history, two classes of Freemasons, namely, Operative and Speculative.

The Speculative Masons, however, though very definitely distinguished after the separation of the Fraternity from its monastic connections, from the Operative, by their want of practical skill, did not form an independent and distinct class.

In the lodges into which they were admitted they mingled with the members on a common footing. We presume that this was the case in all countries; we know that it was so in Scotland. They underwent a modified initiation into membership, in which of course the presentation of an essay, piece, or *chef d'œuvre* was omitted; they assisted in the admission of new members, took part in the deliberations of the society on affairs of business, voted, and even held office.

Starting with our inquiries from the time when the Fraternity dissolved its connection with the monasteries, where it really played the rôle of a subordinate, we may well suppose that at first the number of these Speculative Masons or Honorary members must have been very small.

But they never could have been an insignificant element. The Operative Masons held the ascendancy in members, but the Speculative Masons must have always exerted a powerful influence by their better culture, their wealth, and their higher social position.

These two elements of Freemasonry continued to exist together for a very long period of time. But at length, from causes which must be attributed to the increasing power and influence of the Speculative element, as well as to intellectual progress, there came a total and permanent disseverance of the two.

The precise time of this disseverance must be placed at the beginning of the 18th century, though it is evident that for some years previously the feeling which eventually led to it must have been gradually growing. The men of culture and science who were in constant communion with their operative associates, were getting dissatisfied with a society of mechanics who had lost much of that skill as architects which had given so bright a reputation to their predecessors of the Middle Ages, and who were now not very much superior to the "Cowans," the "wall builders," and the "rough layers" whom these skillful predecessors had so much contemned—contemned so much that the Freemasons would not work in common with them on the same building.

The first act of severance occurred in England in the year 1717, when the Grand Lodge of "Free and Accepted Masons" was organized, an event that has been very generally designated by Masonic writers by the rather questionable title of the Revival.

This was followed nineteen years afterward by the organization of the Grand Lodge of Scotland with similar methods.

Both of these bodies were formed by lodges that were Operative, but in each case the Operative character was abandoned, and the Grand Lodges and the lodges under them became entirely Speculative; that is to say, they ceased to cultivate practical Masonry, and were composed for the most part of members who were totally ignorant of the Mystery of the handicraft of building.

In other countries the process of disseverance did not take place according to the English and Scottish method. Elsewhere than in those two countries the organization of Freemasonry as it prevailed in the Middle Ages had long ceased to exist.

In France the *Corporations des Metiers* and in Germany the *Hütten* had been abolished, though in both countries the Stonemasons still continued to maintain an organization, which, however, was outside of the law, and without legal protection or recognition.

But we must look for the real causes of the change from Operative to Speculative Masonry to England, for it was in that country that the change was first developed and consummated.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE REMOTE CAUSES OF THE TRANSITION



THE transition from Operative to Speculative Freemasonry was not a spontaneous and sudden act, commencing and completing itself by an instantaneous movement, through which that which was the peculiar characteristic of the institution was at once changed into another and entirely different one.

On the contrary, the epoch of the change can not be precisely determined within the period of six years at least during which the Speculative Masons were engaged in slowly perfecting it. The fortress of Operative Freemasonry, which had derived its strength from its comparative antiquity and from the imperishable labors of the mediæval architects, was not to be taken by storm. It was only by gradual approaches that its stronghold in the lodges was to be overcome.

We are not to suppose that on that eventful festival of St. John the Baptist, when the members of the Four Old Lodges of the Metropolis of England met at the Goose and Gridiron, and elected for the first time a Grand Master to preside in their new organization, that the special and well-understood design of that meeting was at once to change the entire character of the fraternity.

The fact is that the beginning of the 18th century was in England, and more especially in London, the age of clubs. We shall soon see how associations of men for all sorts of purposes, but principally for convivial ones, were established in that city.

Now the Masonic lodges, consisting as they did and as they had done for many years past of professional Masons and of non-professional gentlemen, and the latter preponderating, perhaps in numbers, certainly in influence, would seem to have afforded an admirable opportunity, by their coalition into one body, for the establishment of a club of the very highest rank, one indeed of a

rank and prestige very far superior to that of the obscure and often ridiculous coteries of that day, such as the "No Nose Club," or the "Ugly Faced Club."

We know that for many years previous to 1717 the Operative lodges contained many non-operative or "Gentlemen Masons," and that outside of London and its suburbs this condition lasted for many years afterward. And yet during all that period we have no record of any attempt on the part of the latter to infuse a Speculative element into those lodges.

Even the organization of the Grand Lodge on St. John the Baptist's day, 1717, does not seem, if we may judge from the meager details of that event which Anderson has transmitted to us, to have been intended to accomplish at once a total severance of the Speculative from the Operative element. The "Charges of a Freemason," which were adopted in 1718, for the government of the new form of the institution, were only a collation of the old laws which had formerly regulated the Operative lodges, and were wholly inapplicable to a system from which practical Masonry had been eliminated.

Nor was there any pretense that these were new laws, framed for a new society. It was thus acknowledged that the old Constitutions of the Operative were to be preserved. The disruption was not to be suddenly effected. Anderson, recording the transactions of 1718, under the Grand Mastership of George Payne, says that "this year several old copies of the Gothic Constitutions were produced and collated."<sup>1</sup>

The preservation and publication of these "charges" as the standard of Masonic law very clearly show that at that time the thought of a purely Speculative institution, fully dissolved from any association with Operative Masonry, had not yet entered the minds of those who were engaged in the establishment of a Grand Lodge.

The most that we can say of their ulterior views at that early period, was that they intended to enforce, with greater rigor, the usage which had long before prevailed, and to interpret with the utmost liberality the standing regulation which admitted persons who were not Masons by profession to the privileges of the Society.

It was not until 1721, four years after the organization of the

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, "Constitutions," 2d ed., p. 110.

Grand Lodge, that a set of "General Regulations," which had been compiled by Payne the year before, were adopted, which were applicable to the requirements of a purely Speculative association, in which the Operative element was wholly ignored.

It will be seen hereafter, when the early records of the Grand Lodge are brought under review, that though no Operative Mason was ever elected Grand Master, yet until the year 1723 that class was recognized by being chosen to the high office of Grand Warden on several occasions.

After that year the Operative Masons appear to have retired either voluntarily or involuntarily from all prominence, and probably from all participation in the concerns of the Society. It had by this time assumed a thoroughly speculative character; its laws and usages were such as were appropriate to a non-operative system; and its offices were given only to noblemen, to scholars, and to men of high social position.

The immediate cause of these changes has with very great certainty been attributed to the efforts of three persons—John Theophilus Desaguliers, a philosopher, James Anderson, a clergyman, and George Payne, an antiquary. To them are we to attribute the influences which gradually but successfully led between the years 1717 and 1723 to the complete separation of the Speculative from the Operative Order, and to the birth of that system which, after many subsequent accretions, modifications, and improvements, has been developed into the widely extended Freemasonry of the present day.

But there were other causes in operation which assisted in the accomplishment of those results, in which these celebrated persons played so important a part, and without which their labors would hardly have been successful.

The first and perhaps the most important event which prepared the way for the transition was the decadence of architecture in England, where in the 17th century the principles of the Gothic style with all its symbolism began to give way to the corrupt forms of the Renaissance, which was a revival of the Roman style. It was on Gothic architecture that the Freemasons of the Middle Ages had founded that school of symbolism which gave to every stone a living voice, and supported the claim of the Fraternity to the elevated position which it had long held above all other handicrafts.

But when the Craft had abandoned this so long honored art and the lodges ceased to be, as Lord Lyndsay has called them, "parliaments of genius," there must have been some, as there are now, who deplored the change from high to low taste, and who were anxious to perpetuate, if not the practical part of the art, as it has been pursued by the Gothic Masons, at least to preserve the spirit of symbolism which had been in mediæval times its principal and peculiar characteristic.

Thus the way was gradually prepared in the 17th century for that spiritualizing of the labors and implements of Operative Masonry which resulted finally, after many slow steps, in the formation of that system of purely symbolic Masonry which exists at the present day, wholly distinct from the body of working Masons.

The science of symbolism had been originally practiced only by the Church and by the Gothic Freemasons. When it had been abandoned in the former by the Reformation and in the latter by the decay of architecture, it was still preserved in some of its forms, not in all its excellence, by the Rosicrucian society which sprung into existence in the 17th century. Though the mystical association of Rosicrucianism was not, in any way, connected with Freemasonry, it can not be doubted that it played an important part in inspiring many members of the Masonic lodges of Operative Masonry with a renewed taste for the mystical symbolism of their predecessors, which in its progressive cultivation led to the inauguration of a purely symbolic association founded on architecture.

Another important cause is to be found in the intellectual revolution which took place in the 17th century, and toward which the Reformation in religion had contributed essential aid. The writings of Bacon had produced a school of experimental philosophy in England, one result of which was the organization of the Royal Society, in whose bosom a race of thinkers was nursed who, in their search for the attainment of knowledge, were ever ready to convert an art such as Operative Masonry into a Speculative Science.

At one time it was a favorite theory with some Masonic historians that the origin of Speculative Freemasonry was to be traced to the Royal Society. Though the theory was a fallacious one, as has been shown in a preceding part of this work, its very existence proves that that Society must, in an indirect way, have had some

influence upon the birth and the growth of the Speculative institution.

It is singularly pertinent to this question that Dr. Desaguliers, to whom, beyond all other men, we must ascribe the organization of Speculative Freemasonry in England, was a distinguished experimental philosopher of the Baconian school and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

It can not, however, be doubted that as the low state of morals, the general depression of learning, and the decay of art, which distinguished the close of the 17th century, had a very unfavorable effect on the character of Operative Masonry; so the improvement of the moral and intellectual condition of England, and the cultivation of a refinement in literature and science which sprang up soon after the beginning of the 18th century, must have awakened a new spirit in the thinkers of the age.

Dr. Oliver, in an essay on this subject,<sup>1</sup> attributes this revolution principally to the influence of Addison, Steele, and the other periodical writers of the day. He quotes the opinion of Foster,<sup>2</sup> who had said that "it is incredible to conceive the effect these writings have had on the town; . . . they have set all our wits and men of letters upon a new way of thinking of which they had little or no notion before." Hence Oliver says, "It will not be conceding too much to the influence of these immortal productions, if we admit that the Revival of Freemasonry in 1717 was owing, in a great measure, to their operation on public taste and public morality."<sup>3</sup>

As of the two most important and effective of these periodical essays by Steele and Addison, the *Tatler* was begun in 1709, and the *Spectator* in 1711, while the organization of the Grand Lodge which was the prelude to the establishment of Speculative Freemasonry has the date of 1717, the inference of Oliver as to their influence will hardly be deemed untenable.

Another cause leading directly to the establishment of Speculative Freemasonry has been adduced by Kloss in his German work

<sup>1</sup> Introductory Dissertation on the State of Freemasonry in the 18th century, affixed to his edition of Hutchinson's "Spirit of Masonry," p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Essays, in a series of "Letters to a Friend," by John Foster.

<sup>3</sup> Intro. Dissertation, p. 6.

on the *History of Freemasonry in France*, which is well worth consideration. He says :

“When Wren had completed the building of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, in 1708, and thus the workmen had no common center remaining, their corporate customs, like those of many other bodies, would, in the course of time, have been lost and wiped away, if the brotherhood had not been sustained as such by the power of that ancient addition—the non-professional members, taken from the various grades of society. The religious contentions, which had prevailed for two centuries, were at last compelled to recede before the spirit of toleration. Hence the necessity of some place of rest, where political discussions could not enter, was the cause and the reason for the formation and adoption of, about the year 1716, an organized system, then first appearing as Freemasonry.”<sup>1</sup>

Of the correctness of two assertions made in this paragraph we have convincing proofs. The decay of the Operative branch of Freemasonry is evident, since, according to Oliver, there were in 1688 only seven lodges in existence, and of them there were but two that held their meetings regularly.<sup>2</sup> There was some improvement at the beginning of the next century, which, however, it would be but fair to attribute to the influence and the energy of the honorary or non-professional members.

In respect to the question of religious toleration, it is very evident that in the matter of a creed there was a very great difference between the two systems, the Operative and the Speculative. The early Operative Freemasons were, of course, Roman Catholics. After the Reformation in England they became Protestants, but strict adherents to the church. This is apparent from the older and the more recent Constitutions.<sup>3</sup>

There was another cause which must have exercised a very potent influence in hastening the establishment of a Grand Lodge of Speculative Freemasonry. This was the universal passion for the formation of clubs which took possession of the English people toward the close of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th century.

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<sup>1</sup> “Geschichte der Freimaurer in Frankreich,” i., 13.

<sup>2</sup> Introductory Essay on the State of Freemasonry.

<sup>3</sup> In the oldest of the Old Constitutions which are extant, the Halliwell poem, there are directions for hearing Mass.

The word Club, as signifying a society or assembly of persons each contributing his share of the expenses, came into the English language, as the thing itself did into English social customs, at the period specified. Dryden is the first writer who speaks of political clubs, but the word is in familiar use in the pages of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. These new organizations had in a short time become so important as to claim a place in literary history ; and in 1709 a work of some magnitude was published in London, entitled *The Secret History of Clubs, particularly of the Golden Fleece. With their Original : And the Characters of the most noted Members thereof*.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Oliver, to whose indefatigable industry and research (however they were sometimes illy regulated) we are indebted for an admirable *Essay on the Usages and Customs of Symbolical Masonry in the 18th Century*,<sup>2</sup> supplies us with the following information on the subject of Clubs :

“The 18th century was distinguished by the existence of numerous local institutions, which periodically congregated together different classes of society, for divers purposes, the chief of which appears to have been the amusement of an idle hour, when the business of the day was ended. Few of these ephemeral societies aimed at a higher flight. Some met weekly, while the members of others assembled every evening. Each profession and calling had its club, and in large towns the trade of every street was not without its means of thus killing the evening hour.

“Such societies embraced every class of persons, from the noble to the beggar ; and whatever might be a man’s character or disposition, he would find in London a club that would square with his ideas. If he were a tall man, the tall club was ready to receive him ; if short, he would soon find a club of dwarfs ; if musically inclined, the harmonic club was at hand ; was he fond of late hours, he joined the owl club ; if of convivial habits, he would find a free and easy in every street ; if warlike, he sought out the lumber troopers ; if a buck of the first water, he joined the club of choice spirits ; and if sober and quiet, the humdrum. If nature had favored him with a gigantic proboscis, an unsightly protuberance on his shoulders, or

<sup>1</sup> I give this title on the authority of Dr. Kloss. It is numbered 237 in his *Bibliography der Freimaurerei*, and is said to have extended to 392 octavo pages.

<sup>2</sup> Prefixed to the third volume of his “Golden Remains.”

any other striking peculiarity, he would have no difficulty in finding a society to keep him in countenance."<sup>1</sup>

Before the middle of the century the number of clubs had increased amazingly. Dermott gives in his *Ahiman Rezon* the names of thirty-eight, besides "many others not worth notice."<sup>2</sup>

Most of these clubs were of a convivial character. There were, however, some whose members aimed at higher pursuits and devoted themselves to the cultivation of art, science, and literature. It must not be forgotten that the Royal Society was originally formed on the pattern of a club.

Dermott mentions a circumstance connected with these clubs which is worthy of notice as showing the popularity of Freemasonry at the time, and the existence then, as at the present day, of societies which sought to imitate its forms, if not always its principles.

"Several of these Clubs or Societies," he says, "have, in imitation of the free-masons, called their club by the name of lodge, and their president by the title of grand master or most noble grand."<sup>3</sup>

Addison, speaking in the *Spectator* of these associations, says :

"Man is said to be a social animal, and as an instance of it we may observe that we take all occasions and pretenses of forming ourselves into those little nocturnal assemblies which are commonly known as clubs. When a set of men find themselves agree in any particular, though never so trivial, they establish themselves into a kind of fraternity and meet once or twice a week on account of such a fantastic resemblance."<sup>4</sup>

The presumption will not, then, be a violent one that the first successful effort toward a secession from Operative Freemasonry, must have been stimulated by the usage among men of all classes, in the early part of the last century, of inaugurating separate societies or clubs.

The meeting in 1716 consisting of honorary or non-professional members of the London Operative lodges, being held, too, at a tavern, as was the custom with all clubs, might very properly and with the utmost respect, be looked upon as a club of the highest class. This club of scientific and literary gentlemen who were desirous of separating from the coarser and less intellectual materials

<sup>1</sup> "On the Usages and Customs of Symbolic Masonry in the 18th Century," page 2.

<sup>2</sup> "Ahiman Rezon," p. xii.    <sup>3</sup> "Ahiman Rezon," ut supra.    <sup>4</sup> *Spectator*, No. IX.



which composed the lodges of practical Masons, was not long afterward, in June, 1717, resolved into a Grand Lodge, the mother of all the Speculative lodges in the world, Scotland excepted, just as the club of philosophers who first met in the latter part of the preceding century, was finally developed into the Royal Society, the most prominent institution of learning in England.<sup>1</sup>

That such was the opinion of the learned Dr. Oliver may be justly inferred from the language used by him in his essay *On the Usages and the Customs of Symbolical Masonry in the 18th Century*. Speaking of the character of the Clubs in which conviviality appears to have been always carried to an excess, he says :

“There was, however, one society in that period, which, if it did indulge its members with the enjoyment of decent refreshment, had a standing law which provided against all excess ; declaring that ‘they ought to be moral men, good husbands, good parents, good sons, and good neighbors, not staying too long from home, and avoiding all excess.’ This society was Freemasonry ; the exclusive character of which excited the envy of all other periodical assemblies of convivial men.”<sup>2</sup>

Five causes appear to have been instrumental in producing that separation of the Speculative from the Operative element in Freemasonry which led to the organization of the Grand Lodge of England and to the establishment of the present system. These, which have been fully treated in the present chapter, may be briefly summarized as follows :

1. The gradual decay of Gothic architecture and the abandonment of scientific methods by the Operative Masons.
2. The intellectual revolution in Europe, which led to the more general cultivation of science and literature.
3. The loss of a common center and a commencing disintegration of the Operative Masons in England, after their last great work, the Cathedral of St. Paul’s, had been finished.
4. The growing desire among men of culture and refinement to

<sup>1</sup> From the year 1716, when the Speculative Masons first met at the Apple Tree Tavern, until June, 1717, when the Grand Lodge was organized at the Goose and Grid-iron, a period of more than six months elapsed. During that time it is not unreasonable to suppose, from contemporary custom, that the members met under a club organization. But this subject will be fully discussed in a future chapter.

<sup>2</sup> “On Usages and Customs,” etc., p. 7.

establish an association from which the spirit of political partisanship and of religious intolerance should be banished.

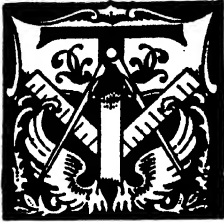
5. And, lastly, the social example given in the beginning of the 18th century by the universal formation of clubs and private societies for all sorts of purposes.

But none of these causes could have been productive of a society of philosophers whose formulas of instruction were derived from the principles of Operative Masonry, had not the way been prepared for the establishment of such a society by relations which had previously existed between the two elements.

To this subject I shall accordingly invite the attention of the reader in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE WAY PREPARED FOR THE TRANSITION



THE very great change from an Operative art to a Speculative Science, by which the whole practical character of the former was abandoned and a system of philosophy was established on its basis, could never have been accomplished by any human efforts, if there had not been some previous provision, which, though undesigned originally for that purpose, rendered the transition from the one to the other practicable, if not easy of execution.

In the process of locomotion, the act of removal from one point to another can not be effected unless there be a pathway which will render the removal possible. If there be no pathway, there can be no removal ; and the more direct the pathway is, and the less it is encumbered by obstructions, the more readily will the removal be accomplished.

So in the intellectual transmutation of an old society into a new one, it is just as necessary that there should be a way prepared by which the change may be effected. The old society may be of such a nature that it would be impossible to convert it into the contemplated new society. The design and objects of the former might be such as to be antagonistic even, and not favorable to the transformation.

Thus it would be impossible to convert a guild of Weavers or of Mercers into an association having the character of a lodge of Speculative Freemasons. The way is not open to such a conversion. The foundation-stone upon which the system of modern Freemasonry is built must have been a fraternity of Operative Builders in stone. It is useless to look for it elsewhere, because the symbolism of Freemasonry is derived altogether from the art of architecture.

This is the best reason that we possess for the rejection of the

theory that the origin of Freemasonry is to be sought in the ancient mysteries of Egypt, of Greece, or of Persia. There is no passable way leading from these Mysteries to Speculative Freemasonry. In the secret doctrines and in the usages of these Mysteries we find no reference to architecture. They were simply systems intended to teach in a mystical way what they supposed to be religious truth. Their organization was so different from that on which the Freemasonry of the present day is based, that we can find no road directly connecting the two.

Those who have sought to make the Speculative Freemasons the legitimate descendants of the Crusaders and the Knights Templars, must meet with the same difficulty in connecting the two. Military associations could never give rise to sodalities, all of whose principles are those of peace and brotherly love. It would have been utterly impossible to transform a camp of knights in armor, thirsting for the blood of their Saracen foes, into a peaceful lodge of Freemasons, engaged, as the French song says, in erecting temples for virtue and dungeons for vice.

It is true that at a later period, when Craft Masonry was supplied with new rituals and when what are called the high degrees were invented, a great deal of dogma was borrowed from or rather found to be identical as to the unity of God and the immortality of the soul with those of the ancient Mysteries, and something like the usages of chivalry was introduced into the developed system of Freemasonry.

But the Speculative Freemasonry which at the beginning of the 18th century was boldly separated from the Operative Masonry, within which it had quietly slept, waiting patiently for its time of birth, knew nothing—recognized nothing—imitated nothing of the Mysteries of Osiris, of Dionysus, or of Mithras, and cared still less for the daring deeds of the warriors of Palestine.

In 1716, when the resolve was first made to segregate Speculative from Operative Freemasonry, and in 1717, when that resolve was carried into effect by the organization of the Grand Lodge of England, those who undertook the enterprise, looked only to the usages and principles of the English Stonemasons for the pattern on which they were to construct the new edifice in which they were thereafter to dwell. Hence it is that the pure, Speculative Freemasonry at its origin borrowed and spiritualized, not the sacred baskets and

phallic emblems of the Mysteries, nor the glittering swords and invincible armor of the Crusaders, but the working tools and professional phrases of the sodality of builders, whence they sprang.

They even, in deference to and in memorial of their descent, preserved the name of the association to which they thus unequivocally ascribed their origin.

They did not profess to be Free Mystagogues or Hierophants, nor Free Knights, but simply, as they then spelt the word, Free Masons, Builders free of the Guild, who still continued to build. They only transmuted the material cathedral, where God was to be worshipped in all the splendor of art, to the spiritual temple of the heart, where the same worship was to be continued in purity and truth.

It is true that we thus materially abridge the pretensions of the institution to a profound antiquity. But unfounded claims never win honor or respect from the honest inquirer. If we were disposed to treat the rise and progress of Freemasonry as a romance, we might indulge the imagination in its wildest flights, with no other object than to make the narrative interesting. But as the purpose is to write a history, we must confine ourselves to authenticated facts, and take the result, whatever it may be, without reservation.

Accepting, then, as true the theory that the Freemasons who commenced the organization of the Speculative system in the year 1716 at the "Apple Tree" Tavern in London, and afterward completed it in 1717 at the "Goose and Gridiron," framed their association after the model of the Stonemasons of the Middle Ages, whose fraternity was still preserved, though in a degenerated form, in the four Operative Lodges of London, we must inquire what were the circumstances that prepared the founders of the new Order which they were instituting for this transition from an Operative art to a purely Speculative science? We must go over the road which they traversed in making the transition from one system to the other.

If we carefully inspect the organizations of the two associations, we will observe that while between them there are some very important differences, there were, on the other hand, some equally important resemblances.

The differences present that well-marked line of demarcation which gave to each an independent individuality. They show that there have been two very distinct fraternities, while the resemblances

between the two, directly considered, show also the dependence of one upon the other and the relation that existed between them.

The differences between them were only three, and were as follows :

1. The mediæval Freemasons were exclusively a body of Operative builders. They admitted, it is true, as honorary members a class of persons who were not stonemasons by profession. This did not, however, in the slightest degree affect the purely Operative character of the institution.

The modern Speculative Freemasons are not Operative builders. No member is necessarily a stonemason. Stonemasons, it is true, are admitted into the brotherhood, just as persons of any other Craft may be, if morally and intellectually qualified.

2. The mediæval Freemasons constituted a guild which was restricted to men of one peculiar handicraft. No one could be admitted into the guild except the Honorary Members, or Theoretic Masons, as they were sometimes called, unless he had served a long apprenticeship to the mystery, extending from one to seven years.

The Speculative Freemasons have no such provision in their Constitution. Although they derive their existence from an association of Stonemasons, and though they preserve much of the language and use all the implements of Operative Masonry in their own association, yet men of every craft and profession, and men without either, are freely admitted, without distinction, into their Brotherhood.

3. Another difference is in the religious character of the two associations. This difference is a very important one, and has already been assigned as one of the causes that led to the separation.

The mediæval Masons were at first Roman Catholic, and afterward, when the Reformation had gained a foothold, and become the religion of the country in which they resided, the Freemasons professed to be Protestants, but in all their regulations a strict allegiance to the Church was required. The mediæval Operative Freemasons all professed and maintained the Christian religion.

But one of the first acts of the Speculative Freemasons after their organization was to establish a system of toleration in respect to religious doctrines. The Mason was required to be of "that religion in which all men agree." Consequently atheists only were precluded from admission to the Brotherhood. In Speculative

Masonry every member is permitted to enjoy his own peculiar views on religious matters, provided that he does not deny the existence of a personal God and of a future life.

These are the essential differences which exist between the two associations. To counterbalance them, there are several very important and significant resemblances. These are as follows :

1. Both systems had some form of initiation into the Brotherhood, and certain methods of recognition by which one member could make himself known to another. These forms and methods were exceedingly simple in the older fraternity, and varied then as they do now in different countries. They afforded only the germ from which in the newer fraternity was developed, by slow steps, the full fruit of a perfect form of initiation and more complicated methods of recognition.

It must be very evident that when the first movement was inaugurated toward the separation of the Speculative from the Operative element, the existence in the latter of a form of initiation and modes of recognition, however simple they may have been, must have suggested the policy of continuing, and as the organization became more mature, of improving them.

That the Modern Order of Free and Accepted Masons is a secret society, in the meaning usually but not accurately ascribed to that phrase, arises from the fact that the Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages were of the same character. Of the fact that the Operative Freemasons were a secret association there is not the least doubt.<sup>1</sup>

If the Operative Masons had not practiced these forms and methods, we may safely infer that nothing of that nature would have been adopted by the Speculative Masons. No other of the contemporary clubs or societies which at that day were springing abundantly into existence had adopted any such methods of organization until a few of them, which were established after the year 1717, such as the Gormagons, followed the example of the Freemasons.

These forms were peculiar to the Operative Freemasons, and that they were adopted by the Speculatives is one of the strongest

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<sup>1</sup> "So studiously did they conceal their secrets," says Halliwell, "that it may be fairly questioned whether even some of those who were admitted into the Society of the (Operative) Freemasons were wholly skilled in all the mysterious portions of the art." —"Archæologia," vol. xxviii., p. 445.

proofs that could be presented that the latter are the direct descendants of the former.

2. Both the Operative and Speculative Freemasons held Geometry in the greatest esteem as being the most important of the sciences. Indeed, in the Old Constitutions, the words were held to be synonymous. The secrets of the mediæval Architects are admitted to have been geometrical, that is, they consisted in an application of the principles of geometry to the art of building.

Mr. Paley, in a sentence that has heretofore been quoted, says that "it is certain that geometry lent its aid in the planning and designing of buildings . . . which were evidently profound secrets in the keeping of the Freemasons."<sup>1</sup>

When Speculative Freemasonry arose out of the declining condition of the Operative system,<sup>2</sup> this respect for geometry was retained as the basis of the symbolic science, as it had been of the building art. "Right angles, horizontals, and perpendiculars," which had been applied to the construction of edifices, received now a spiritual signification as symbols. But seven years after the organization of Speculative Freemasonry, we find the "Free Masons' Signs" depicted in the oldest ritual extant<sup>3</sup> as acute, obtuse, and right angles. The equilateral triangle which Palfrey says was probably the basis of most of the formations of the Operative Freemasons has become the most sacred of the symbols of their Speculative descendants.

In fact, all the geometrical symbols (and there are very few others) which are found in the rituals of modern Freemasonry, such as the triangle, the square, the right angle, and the forty-seventh problem of Euclid may be considered as the débris of what has been called the "lost secrets" of the old Freemasons. As these founded

<sup>1</sup> "Manual of Gothic Architecture."

<sup>2</sup> When an allusion is made to the "decline" of Operative Masonry, it must be understood that the reference is to that system of elevated art which was founded and practiced by the Freemasons of the Middle Ages. Pure Masonry, or the mere art of building, is so necessary to the wants of man, that it must flourish in every civilized Society. But there is the same difference between Operative Freemasonry and Operative Masonry as there is between the gorgeous Cathedral erected for God's worship and the unassuming house built for man's dwelling. That Freemasonry in the sense here given was in a declining condition and had "fallen from its high estate" at the close of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, is the concurrent record of all architectural historians.

<sup>3</sup> "The Grand Mystery Discovered," London, 1724.



their art on the application of the principles of Geometry to the art of building, declaring in their veneration for the science that "there is no handicraft that is wrought by man's hand but it is wrought by geometry," so the Speculative Freemasons, imitating them in that veneration, have drawn from it their most important symbols and announced it in all their rituals to be "the first and noblest of the sciences, and the basis on which the superstructure of Freemasonry is founded."

Of the various links of the chain which connects the Operative Freemasonry of the Middle Ages with the Speculative system of the present times, there is no stronger one than this common cultivation of the science of geometry by both—in the one, as the aid to a style of architecture; in the other, as the foundation of a profound system of symbolism.

Moreover, it supplies an unanswerable objection to the theory which seeks to deduce Freemasonry from the Ancient Mysteries. Between the two this common bond is wanting. The hierophants of Egypt, of Greece, and of Persia presented no geometric teachings in their religious systems, and a modern mystical association which was derived from the Osirian, the Dionysiac, or the Mithraic secret culture, would have been as devoid as its original to any allusions to the science of Geometry.

3. A third point of resemblance is that both the Operative and the Speculative Freemasons cultivated the science of symbolism as an important part of their systems.

There is no one of the resemblances between the mediæval and the modern Freemasons which is so full of suggestion as to the descent of the one from the other, as is the existence of this fact that a science of symbolism was common to both.

That the Freemasons of the Middle Ages cultivated with consummate taste and skill the science of symbolism and infused its principles in all their works, is an authentic fact of history which admits of no denial. The proofs of this are at hand, and if it were necessary might be readily produced.

Findel, whose iconoclasm as an historian never permits him to accept conclusions without a careful investigation, has contributed his authority to the statement that the German Stonemasons made abundant use of symbols in the prosecution of their art.

According to him the implements, and especially the compasses,

the square, the gavel, and the foot-rule, were peculiar and expressive symbols. Other crafts may have symbolized the instruments of their trade, but the Freemasons, above all others, "had special reason to invest them with a far higher value and to associate them with a spiritual meaning ; for it was a holy vocation to which they had devoted themselves. By the erection of a house to God's service, the Master Mason not only perpetuated his own name, but contributed to the glory of the greatest of all Beings by spreading the knowledge of Christianity and by inciting to the practice of Christian virtue and piety." <sup>1</sup>

But it was not to the mere implements of their work that they confined this principle of symbolization. They extended it to the work itself, and every church and cathedral erected by Gothic art is full of the symbolism of architecture. "On all the buildings erected by them," says Findel, "are to be found intimations of their secret brotherhood and of the symbols known to them."

Michelet, the historian of France, always eloquent and florid, becomes especially so when he is referring to the architectural symbolism of the Old Freemasons.

According to him the church, as erected in all the significance of its architectural symbols, is not a mere building of stones, but the material presentation of the Christian drama. "It is," he exclaims, in the fervor of his admiration, "a petrified Mystery, a Passion in stone, or rather the Sufferer himself. The whole edifice, in the austerity of its geometrical architecture, is a living body, a Man. The nave, extending its two arms, is the Man on the cross ; the crypt, or subterranean church, is the Man in the tomb ; the spire is still the same Man, but above, ascending to heaven ; while in the choir obliquely inclining in respect to the nave you see his head bent in agony." <sup>2</sup>

Now this science of symbolism so assiduously and so gracefully cultivated by the mediæval Freemasons was handed down, like an heir-loom, to their modern successors, who in slow process of time developed it into the beautiful system which now forms the vital force of Speculative Freemasonry.

One of the legal and accredited definitions of modern Freemasonry is that it is "a system of morality veiled in allegory and illus-

<sup>1</sup> Findel, "Geschichte," in Lyon's Translation, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Michelet, "Histoire de France," liv. iv., ch. ix., p. 364.

trated by symbols.”<sup>1</sup> As the architecture of the old Freemasons differed from all other architecture in the symbolism which it impressed on every stone, so the morality of the modern Freemasons differs from every other code in the symbolism with which it clothes its instructions.

But in all fairness it must be confessed that the mere fact that the science of symbolism has been cultivated both by the Operative and Speculative Freemasons furnishes no satisfactory evidence that the one has been derived from the other.

Symbolism was the very earliest method by which men sought to convey religious thought. It is believed, with some share of plausibility, that it existed even in pre-historic times. It was common to all nations, and exercised its influence even in the construction of language, for words are merely the symbols of ideas.

The Phallic, supposed to be the most ancient of all worships, was pre-eminently a religion of symbolism. Much of that symbolism has been retained in modern customs and religious observances, though its origin has been forgotten and its application been perverted.

Nearly all the ancient schools were secret, like that of Pythagoras, and clothed their lessons of wisdom with the covering of symbolism. As with the philosophical, so was it with the religious sects called the Mysteries. Their secret dogmas were concealed beneath symbols and allegories.

It is evident, then, that in regard to the single point of symbolism, the modern Freemasons might as well have derived their symbolic usages from the ancient institutions of philosophy or of religion as from the mediæval builders.

But the symbols which were adopted by the modern Freemasons, in the beginning of the 18th century, under their Speculative system, were all based on geometry and on architecture and on its implements.

Now the symbols of the old Operative Freemasons were of precisely the same character. Geometry and architecture were the foundation of both of them.

But the hierophants and mystagogues of the Pagan mysteries employed, in the illustration of their doctrines, symbols, like the

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<sup>1</sup> English Lectures of Dr. Hemming, adopted by the Grand Lodge of England.

phallus, or the serpent, that had no connection whatsoever with the art of building or with the science of mathematics. It is evident that the Speculative Freemasons, when they were instituting their new Society as "a system of morality which was to be illustrated by symbols," could not have derived any suggestions from the Pagan mysteries.

The winged globe or the handled cross of the Egyptians, the mystic van of Eleusis, and the bleeding bull of the rites of Mithras found no place as symbols in the system of the first Speculative Masons.

It is true that at a later period, and especially after the invention of what are called the "high degrees," the original ritual was supplemented by the addition of many symbols culled from these ancient sources.

Among the Operative Freemasons there were also a few symbols which were not connected with Geometry or Architecture, which were, it is supposed, borrowed from the Gnostics, with whom these old builders appear to have had some intercourse. But these symbols were chiefly confined to the proprietary marks, and consequently never were incorporated into the ritual of the Speculatives.

But the society which in 1716 seceded or separated from the Operative Lodges of London, and in less than a year after organized the "Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons," when adopting its unimposing ritual, gave the most ample testimony in its construction of the unmixed influence of an association of builders. The symbolism employed in the beginning by the Speculative Freemasons therefore furnished all the evidence that is necessary, if no other were forthcoming, of their direct descent from the Operative Freemasons of the Middle Ages.

4. A fourth resemblance between the two associations is found in the fact that both were divided into three classes, bearing the same name, namely, Masters, Fellows, and Apprentices.

In the Operative system these were mere ranks or classes, which do not appear, from any evidence we possess, to have any distinct form of initiation or methods of recognition by which the classes were esoterically separated from each other. In other words, there was no such thing as a series of degrees, as that term is now masonically understood, but only one degree or form of initiation common to all—to the Apprentice as well as to the Master.

This was precisely the system adopted by the Speculative Freemasons at the outspring of the separation. For at least three years they pursued the old Operative method, and had but one esoteric form of admission for all their members. The fabrication of the three degrees was an afterthought, which did not take place until at least the year 1720.

Bro. W. J. Hughan, who on this subject will be willingly recognized as of the highest authority, has made this positive statement on the subject:<sup>1</sup>

“The reference to Masonic degrees (as we understand the term now) never occurs in the ancient minutes, no rituals of degrees prior to 1720 are in existence; and whatever esoteric customs may have been communicated to craftsmen before the last century, they do not appear to have necessitated the temporary absence of either class of members from the lodge.”

But as this has long been, and even now is, a mooted question among masonic scholars, a very few inclining to give to the series of Craft degrees a greater antiquity than they seem entitled to, the subject will be discussed in all its bearings in a future chapter of this work, when the judgment expressed by Bro. Hughan will, I think, be sustained by the clearest historical evidence.

In respect to the inquiry which we are now pursuing, the decision of the question is unimportant. For whether we consider that the Masters, Fellows, and Apprentices represented three degrees of esoteric Masonry or only three classes of workmen, there is no doubt that the Speculative Freemasons derived the idea of such a division from the Operatives. They could not have got it from any of the religious or philosophic systems of antiquity. They could not have found it in the Mysteries of Osiris nor in the school of Pythagoras; in neither of which does any such division occur.

Whatever changes the Speculatives may have made after their organization by transmuting what were classes in the Operative system into degrees, the change could not obliterate the evidence that the former was the successor of the latter, and could have an origin only in an association of craftsmen to whom such a division into classes or ranks of workmen was common and necessary.

5. Another resemblance is found in the common reference of

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter in the *London Freemason* for June 27, 1874.

both to the Temple of Solomon as a pattern or type on which much of their symbolism has been founded.

It is not intended to maintain the theory that the Institution of Freemasonry has descended from the Tyrian and Jewish builders at the Temple erected by King Solomon. It has already engaged our attention in a preceding part of this work, and I have sought, I hope and think successfully, to show that the Solomonic legend as it has been formulated in the third degree of our modern Freemasonry, though accepted in the lodge rituals, is a mere myth without a particle of historical authority to sustain it.

Yet as a part of the great *Legend of the Craft*, the connection of King Solomon's Temple with the supposed history of Masonry was not unknown to the Operative Masons of at least the 15th and succeeding centuries, since they were familiar with the Old Constitutions in which this Legend was embodied.

Notwithstanding that the details of the construction of this Temple by the Jewish and Tyrian Masons contained in the *Legend of the Craft* are very brief, these details, unsatisfactory as they are, were enough to inspire the Freemasons of the Middle Ages with the belief that the building had been erected by the aid of their predecessors. Hence their Master Builders preserved a reverential reference to it in many of their architectural symbols.

But there is no evidence that the Hiramic legend, such as met with in the lodges, was ever known to the architects of the Middle Ages.

Still, the history of the Temple, inaccurately as it was given in the *Legend*, was accepted by them as a part of the history of the Craft, and the building of the magnificent structure was esteemed by them as one of the most glorious works of the ancient Brotherhood.

From the Operative Freemasons the Temple idea passed over to their Speculative successors. From no other source could the latter have derived it. Its presence among them, coupled with the other resemblances, especially that of the division into three classes, is a most irrefragable proof of the intimate connection of the two associations.

The founders of Speculative Freemasonry found the simple *Legend of the Craft* ready at hand. They adopted it—incorporated it into their new association—and in a short time, with great ingenu-

ity, developed it into the beautiful and impressive allegory of the Third degree.

6. A very significant resemblance between the Operative and the Speculative Freemasons is shown in the fact that all the written laws and usages of the latter are founded upon those which were enacted for the government of the former.

The oldest code of laws for the government of Speculative Freemasons is that contained in the document entitled "The Charges of a Free-Mason," which were adopted in 1722 by the Grand Lodge and published in the first edition of the *Book of Constitutions*. In this edition it is said that they have been "extracted from the ancient records of lodges beyond sea and of those in England, Scotland, and Ireland for the use of the lodges in London."<sup>1</sup>

The statutes which governed the Operative Freemasons are contained in the old manuscript Constitutions, which range in date from the end of the 13th to the beginning of the 18th century. The regulations which they contain are wholly inappropriate to the government of a non-Operative society.

Still, as the Speculative was founded upon the Operative association, and was only a development of the principles of the latter in an application of them to moral and philosophical purposes, the laws of the Operative society were largely made use of by the Speculative Fraternity in the construction of their new code.

It is true that the statutes contained in the manuscript Constitutions have not, with a few exceptions, been copied word for word in the "Charges" adopted for the regulation of the newly born Brotherhood. This was hardly to be expected. That which is justly appropriate for a mechanic pursuing a mechanical occupation, would be very absurd and incongruous when applied to a philosopher engaged in a philosophical inquiry.

Still, the spirit of the old laws has been rigidly observed. There is not a regulation in the "Charges" adopted in 1722 which does not find an analogy in the Constitutions of the Operative Craft con-

<sup>1</sup> The "Charges" printed in the 2d or 1738 edition of the Constitutions are of little or no value as an exponent of the common law of Freemasonry, as they were unauthoritatively altered in many important respects by Dr. Anderson. But as an historical document it is worthy of consideration, as it shows the gradual outgrowth of the Speculative from the Operative system and indicates the mode in which the laws were modified in order to accommodate the application of the old laws to the new association.

tained in the old manuscript records, beginning, so far as we have any trace of them, with the *Constitutions of the Art of Geometry according to Euclid*, which was written, it is supposed, in the year 1399, and which was in all probability a copy of some older manuscript, now, perhaps, irrecoverably lost. The old law has been retained, but in its spirit and application there has been a material change.

Thus, by way of example, we find in the "Charges" of 1722 the following clause :

"No Master shall give more wages to any Brother or Apprentice than he may deserve."

Now this most certainly could not have meant that in a lodge of Speculative Freemasons the Master should not pay more than a certain justly earned amount of wages to an Entered Apprentice. In 1722, when this regulation was adopted, the Masters of lodges did not pay wages, in the ordinary acceptance of the word, to any of the members.

The French Masons have retained the use of this word in their technical language, and show us very clearly what meaning was intended to be conveyed by these "Charges," when they spoke of paying a Speculative Freemason his wages.

What the English and American Freemasons call "advancement from a lower to a higher degree," the French Freemasons designate by the expression "increase of wages." When we say that an Entered Apprentice has been advanced to the degree of Fellow-Craft, the French express the same fact by stating that the Apprentice has received an increase of wages.

This, then, is the idea intended to be conveyed in that clause of the "Charges" of 1722 which has just been quoted. Translated into the language of the present day, we find it in that law which exists in all Masonic jurisdictions and under the sanction of all Grand Lodges, that no Mason shall be advanced to a higher degree until he has shown suitable proficiency in the preceding one.

Now this law of Speculative Freemasonry has been derived from and finds its analogy in the Old Constitutions of the Operative Freemasons, where the following law is extant :

"Every Master shall give pay to his Fellows and servants as they may deserve, so that he be not defamed with false working." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lansdowne MS., anno 1560.



It is very manifest that here the literal meaning of the law as it was applicable to Operative Freemasonry has been abandoned, but the spirit has been preserved in a symbolical interpretation.

Again, in the "Charges" adopted by the Speculatives in 1722, the following regulation will be found :

"None shall discover envy at the prosperity of a Brother nor supplant him, nor put him out of his work if he be capable to finish the same ; for no man can finish another's work so much to the Lord's profit, unless he be thoroughly acquainted with the design and draughts of him that began it."

No one, on the mere reading of this regulation, can hesitate to believe that it must have been originally intended for the government of working Masons, and that the Speculative Masons must have derived it from them.

Accordingly, if we look into the Old Constitutions of the Operative Freemasons we shall find the same law, though not expressed in identical words. The Operative law is thus stated in the Sloane MS., whose date is about 1645.

"Noe Maister nor Fellowe shall supplant others of there worke (that is to say) ; if he have taken a worke, or stand Maister of a Lord's work, you shall not put him out of it ; if hee bee able of cunning to performe the same."

Now we can very easily understand the meaning of this last regulation as applied to an association or fraternity of working Masons. It was intended to prevent the unfair interference of one Operative Freemason with another, by seeking to wrest employment from him in surreptitious and underhanded ways. It is not, even at this day, considered by craftsmen to be an honorable act, though not forbidden, as it was to the old Freemasons, by an express statute.

But what can be the meaning of such a law when applied, as it is in the "Charges" of 1722, to Speculative Freemasons? They have no "Lord's work" to do, in which they might be supplanted by a rival craftsman.

If the literal meaning of the law were to be accepted, we should verify the truth of Scripture that it is the letter which killeth. But if we apply the symbolic interpretation, which must have been the one given to it by the Speculative Freemasons, we shall find that the spirit of the old Operative regulations is still preserved and obeyed by all the Grand Lodges in the world. It is in fact the very law that

applies to and is the foundation of the well-known and often discussed doctrine of Masonic jurisdiction.

The law as it is now understood is that no lodge shall interfere with another lodge in conferring degrees on a candidate ; that when he has received the First degree in any lodge, he becomes, masonically, the work of that lodge and must there receive the rest of the degrees. No other lodge shall be permitted to supplant it, or to take the finishing of that work out of its hands. The Apprentice must be passed and raised in the lodge wherein he was initiated.

Thus the law of Speculative Freemasonry which is everywhere accepted by the Craft as the rule of courtesy for the government of lodges in their relation to each other, was evidently founded on the principles of Operative Freemasonry, taken, in fact, from the law of that older branch of the Institution and, as it were, spiritualized in its practical application to the government of the Speculative branch.

Viewed in their literal meaning, it is very evident that the whole of the "Charges" adopted in the year 1722 by the Grand Lodge of England, just after its severance from the Operative lodges, are laws which must have been intended for an association of working Masons.

They were the statutes of an Operative guild, and were adopted in the bulk by the Speculative Freemasons at the time of the separation, to be subsequently and gradually interpreted in their meaning and modified in their purpose to suit the Speculative idea.

Other points of difference and other points of resemblance might be found on a more minute investigation, but the connection between the two branches has, I think, been sufficiently shown.

The differences have enabled us to give to each association a personality and an individuality which manifestly separate the one from the other. The guild of Operative and the guild of Speculative Freemasons were and are entirely distinct, in their character and design. The parent and the child are not the same, though there will be resemblances which indicate the common lineage.

Now the resemblances which have been described as existing between the two Fraternities, while they paved the way for the easy outgrowth of the one from the other, furnish also the most incontestable evidence of the influence that was exerted by the guild of mediæval Freemasons on the organization of the Speculative Free-

masons who sprang into existence in England at the beginning of the 18th century. To use a Darwinian phrase, the change might be said to have been produced by a sort of evolution.

In other words, if there had been no guilds of Operative Freemasons, such as history paints them, from the 10th to the 17th centuries, there would have been no lodges of Speculative Freemasons in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Thus we establish the truth of the hypothesis which it has been the object of this work to maintain, that the Freemasonry of the present day is derived solely, in its primitive organization, from the Building Corporations of the Middle Ages; and that its rites, its doctrines, and its laws have suffered no modification except that which naturally resulted from a change of character when the Operative Fraternity became a Speculative one.

This is, I think, about the sum and substance and the true solution of the historical problem which refers to the connection of the Speculative with the Operative association; of the Freemasons of to-day with the Freemasons who came from Lombardy and who flourished in the Middle Ages; of the men whose lodges have now passed into every country where civilization has extended, and everywhere exerted a powerful moral influence, with the men who erected monuments of their artistic skill at Magdeburg, and Strasburg, and Cologne, at Canterbury and York, at Kilwinning and Melrose.

Our attention must next be directed to the historical events that took place immediately after the separation in England, and afterward in Scotland and in other countries—events which make up the narrative of the rise and progress of Speculative Freemasonry.

To these events the following chapters will be devoted.







